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THE GOP DEBACLE: John O'Sullivan · Will Saletan · Kate O'Beirne · John Hood · The Editors

NATIONAL REVIEW

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ARE IDEAS ENOUGH?

Ramesh Ponnuru **on the GOP Contender**

PLUS:

Lowry and Decter on Newt Gingrich
Brookhiser on John Updike
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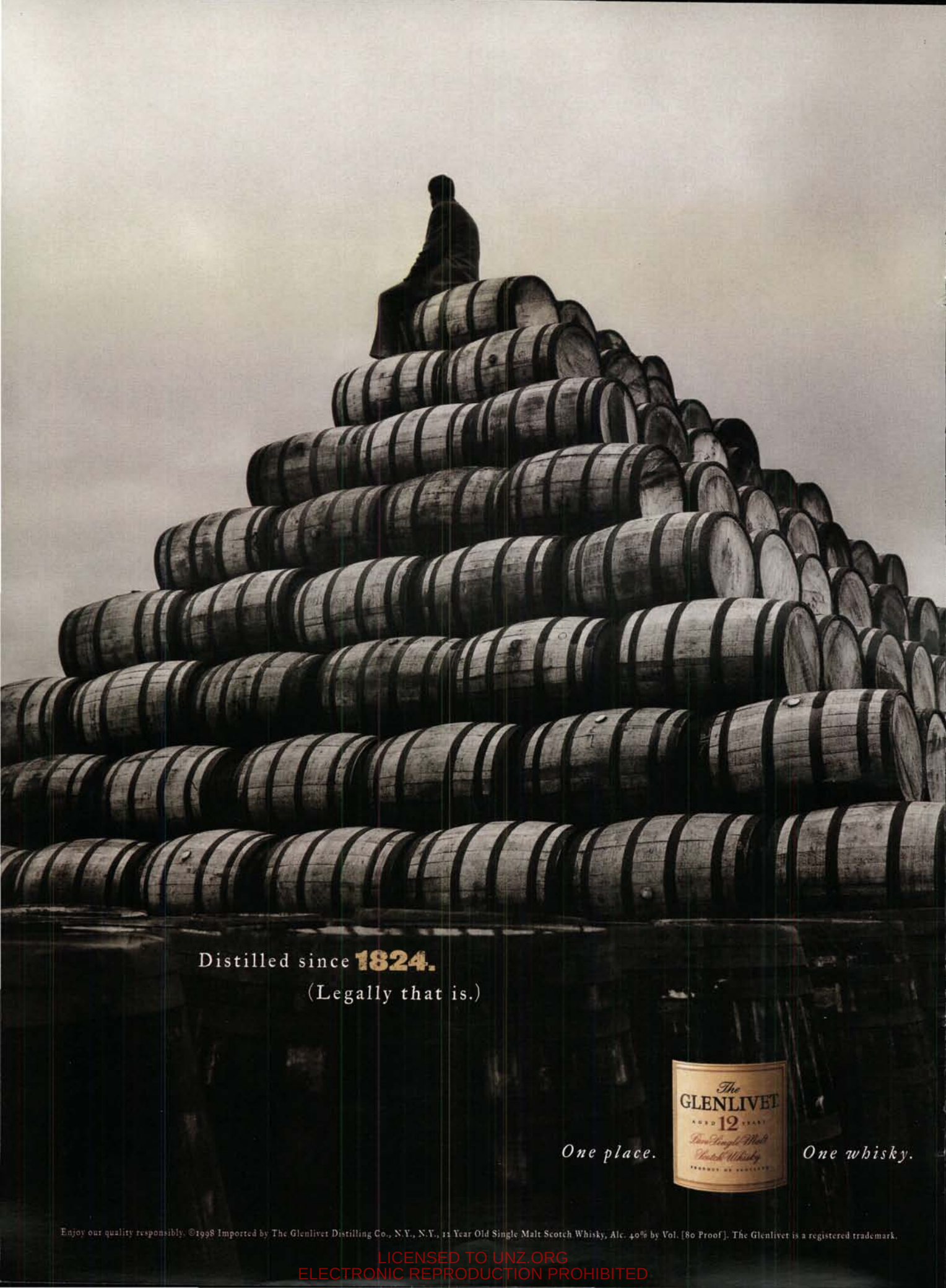

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■ LETTERS ■

ANIMAL MAGNETISM

Matthew Scully falls for every liberal lie about modern agriculture in his piece, "Animal Spirit" [Nov. 9]. The idea that there are factory farms abusing animals for profit is simply not true. Animals that are stressed do not stay healthy, nor do they put on weight. You cannot starve a profit out of an animal. While there will always be isolated instances of cruelty in agriculture, it is far less than in nature. The coyote or the bear do not abide by humane slaughter laws.

Scully's attitude is characteristic of an urban culture that does not know how its food, and innumerable animal by-products such as anti-freeze, are produced. The same "unseen hand" that Adam Smith saw guide commerce guides a rancher's treatment of his livestock.

Doug Cooper
Casper, Wyo.

I am a conservative Catholic, a food producer, and a hunter, and I have no qualms about using plants or animals for food. I was therefore stunned to read Matthew Scully's article "Animal Spirit" in NATIONAL REVIEW. The idea of the bright and sensitive pig, for example, is plain wrong. It is also a physical impossibility to hook a live, 270-lb. pig on a rail, as Mr. Scully believes (these animals are slaughtered prior to the rail). And as for the movie *Babe*, how can Mr. Scully assign human characteristics to animals based on a movie written by, directed by, filmed by, and acted by humans? I have lived a lifetime and never seen an animal act like a human; I have, however, seen plenty of humans act like animals.

Craig Nickman
Pleasanton, Neb.

Matthew Scully's point, even if overstated, is well taken, although I am surprised he did not mention good old Francis of Assisi. After a hard day of preaching to the animals, St. Francis still could not enjoy a decent meal without mixing some ashes with his food. Yet Mr. Scully fails to make the best defense of a conservative conservation movement by ignoring the roots of present-day "environmentalism" in the early twentieth century (although its most notable supporter, President Theodore Roosevelt, was an avid hunter and unapologetic trophy collector). Mr. Scully seems to exhibit the same faint-hearted distaste for hunting that cripples the "environmentalists." Hunting not only provides a healthy and character-building diversion, but instills a proper respect for all God's creation. I assert that today, fewer meat-eating Americans would be able to kill their meals than ever before. Americans have the stomachs to eat meat but not to kill it. In the same way that a society repulsed by images of aborted fetuses continues to demand the right to "choose," so too are we horrified by the plight of veal calves but unable to curb our appetites. I submit to Mr. Scully that if one is not able to chop the head off a Cornish Hen, then perhaps one should forgo the pleasure of eating it.

J. James DeCamp
Garden City, N.Y.

Mr. Cooper calls my thoughts on animal welfare "characteristic of an urban culture." As it happens I hail from his own home town, Casper, Wyoming. My description of factory farms was not a "liberal lie," and I am surprised that Mr. Nickman has never witnessed the automated shackling method that lifts live pigs by their ankles onto a conveyor belt that carries them to slaughter. These farms are places of stinking, nightmarish bedlam, and if you could walk all of humanity through one of them, 90 per cent would never touch meat again—a point Mr. DeCamp has made better than I ever could. I thank him for his "pro-choice" comparison; though I do not equate the life of a veal calf with the life of a child, his argument does indeed point out our human capacity for exploiting the weak and vulnerable just so long as it suits our purposes and we are spared from looking at it. As for Theodore Roosevelt and his year-long rampage through Africa, I'm not sure even the Bull Moose himself would approve of the canned hunts, high-tech weaponry, "guaranteed-kill" safaris, and other cowardly and loutish things that today pass for sportsmanship. Thanks, too, for bringing up good old Francis of Assisi, who would certainly not give his blessing to DeCamp's idea of trophy-hunting as "character building," and whose example could teach the modern hunter much about our fellow creatures and even more about manhood.—MS

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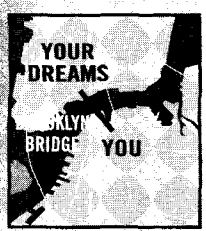

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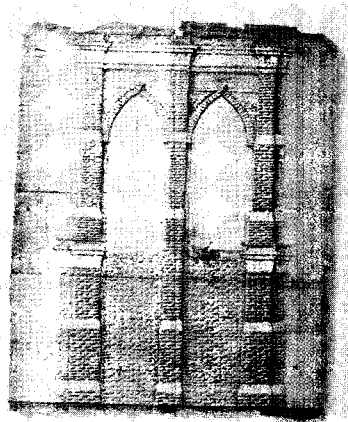

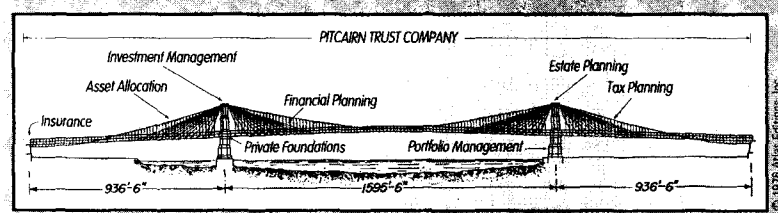

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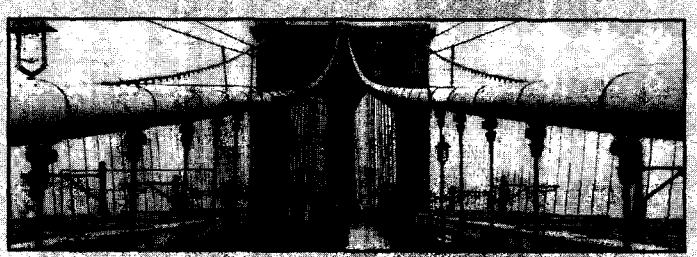

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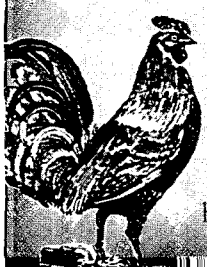

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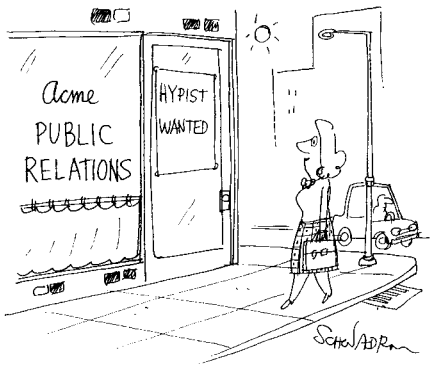
■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ Post-election spin: "We had a bad night as part of what is basically a good decade," says Republican National Committee Communications Director **Cliff May**, on Fox News Channel . . . In narrow Senate loss, Democrat **Scott Baesler** (Ky.) says the National Right to Life PAC's ads on radio "probably . . . hurt me more than anything else." . . . More bad news: pollster **Kellyanne Fitzpatrick** finds in exit polls that 47 per cent of voters prefer "a smaller government that offers fewer services" while 40 per cent prefer "a bigger government that offers more services"—in 1996, the split was 64–24. Among self-identified conservatives in 1998, 56 per cent wanted smaller government and 35 per cent bigger; in 1996, figures were 76 and 18. . . . Arizona elects women to all five top constitutional offices, including GOP Gov. **Jane Hull**, making 5 of 6 most powerful women in state politics Republicans. . . . *Wall Street Journal* editorializes, "it is clear that the Democratic Party's financial constituency base is gambling, trial lawyers, and public unions, a collection of interests more appropriate to a party seeking power in, say, Russia."

■ Sen. **John Ashcroft** (R., Mo.), on **Newt Gingrich**, to Associated Press: "He now resigns because the GOP abandoned its vision and ideas in favor of political passivity and platitudes. As the House learned a lesson taught at the hand of the American people, the Senate needs to get the message, too." . . . Heritage Foundation's **Marshall Wittmann**, on GOP leadership fights: "It's Bosnia without the peacekeepers." . . . President **Clinton** awards National Humanities Medal to historians **Stephen Ambrose** and **Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.**, signers of October letter opposing impeachment. . . . *National Journal*'s **William Powers**: "Anyone who's watched [NBC's **Tim**] **Russert** closely knows that about 4 out of every 5 of his questions are traps of one sort or another."

■ Consensus among political analysts: whichever party wins White House in 2000 also wins House, probably Senate. . . . Democratic Leadership Council's **Al From** on Texas governor: "**George Bush** is running around with New Democrat themes on his bus: opportunity and responsibility. I suspect when voters get a choice between the real New Democrat and the imposter, they'll know which one is the right one." . . . Missouri Gov. **Mel Carnahan** (D.) announces challenge to Sen. John Ashcroft on day after election, worrying Ashcroft supporters that their candidate must choose between running for White House and keeping Senate seat in 2000. Missouri's late filing deadline lets Ashcroft test presidential waters and still opt for re-election, but "**Dornan** effect" could hamper effort. . . . **Bob Dole** on his wife **Elizabeth**: "She'd be a good candidate [for President]. . . . But I'm going to stay away from her campaign because I want her to win." . . . Republicans pick Philadelphia for convention in 2000, Democrats appear to favor Los Angeles.



■ Sen. **Daniel Patrick Moynihan** (D., N.Y.) announces he won't seek new term in 2000. Possible candidates for seat include New York Mayor **Rudy Giuliani**, just-defeated Sen. **Alfonse D'Amato**, and Reps. **Rick Lazio** and **Peter King** on Republican side; State Comptroller **Carl McCall**, environmental activist **Robert F. Kennedy Jr.**, **JFK Jr.**, and Clinton Housing Secretary **Andrew Cuomo** on Democratic side. . . . Depending on outcome in New York, Senate could house four Kennedys after 2000 elections. The other three: **Ted** from Massachusetts, Rep. **Patrick** from Rhode Island in Sen. **John Chafee**'s (R.) seat, and Maryland Lt. Gov. **Kathleen Kennedy Townsend** in Sen. **Paul Sarbanes**'s (D.) seat. . . . Chicago joins New Orleans in suing gun manufacturers for costs of crime, filing for $433 million in damages. Miami–Dade County considers similar strategy. . . . District of Columbia announces that it has violated congressional ban on using public funds to pay for abortions, paying for 756 in 1997 and 1998. Acting Health Commissioner, in *Washington Post*, cites "administrative breakdown," then blames Congress for imposing rule on local authorities in first place. . . . Catholic churches in Indiana and New York, plus Chicago office of Pro-Life Action League, receive threatening letters that purport to contain anthrax. . . . Massachusetts teacher certification exam flunked by 45 per cent of takers in October, an improvement over earlier results. Union leaders question validity of exam. . . . **Thomas L. Phillips** donates $1 million toward preservation of **Ronald Reagan**'s California ranch near Santa Barbara, says Young America's Foundation.

■ City Council of Birmingham, England, renames Christmas season "Winterval," sparking protests from church leaders. . . . Germany weighs granting health, retirement, and unemployment benefits to estimated 500,000 prostitutes. . . . Israel considers law forcing radio stations to devote half of music schedule to Hebrew songs. . . . Russia's Constitutional Court rules President **Boris Yeltsin** cannot run for third term. . . . Soviet archives reveal hoax behind 1952 North Korean claim that United States engaged in germ warfare. . . . Food and electricity shortages force more than 10 per cent of population in far-eastern Russia to relocate permanently since early 1990s. . . . India plans to commission first nuclear-powered submarine by 2004, with support from Russian defense ministry. . . . New Caledonia, one of France's last Pacific island colonies, votes for some autonomy with eventual separation from France.

■ National Organization for Women President **Patricia Ireland**: "We must elect real feminists to public offices at every level—from dog catcher to President." Feminist dog-catcher platform: No more spaying? **NR**

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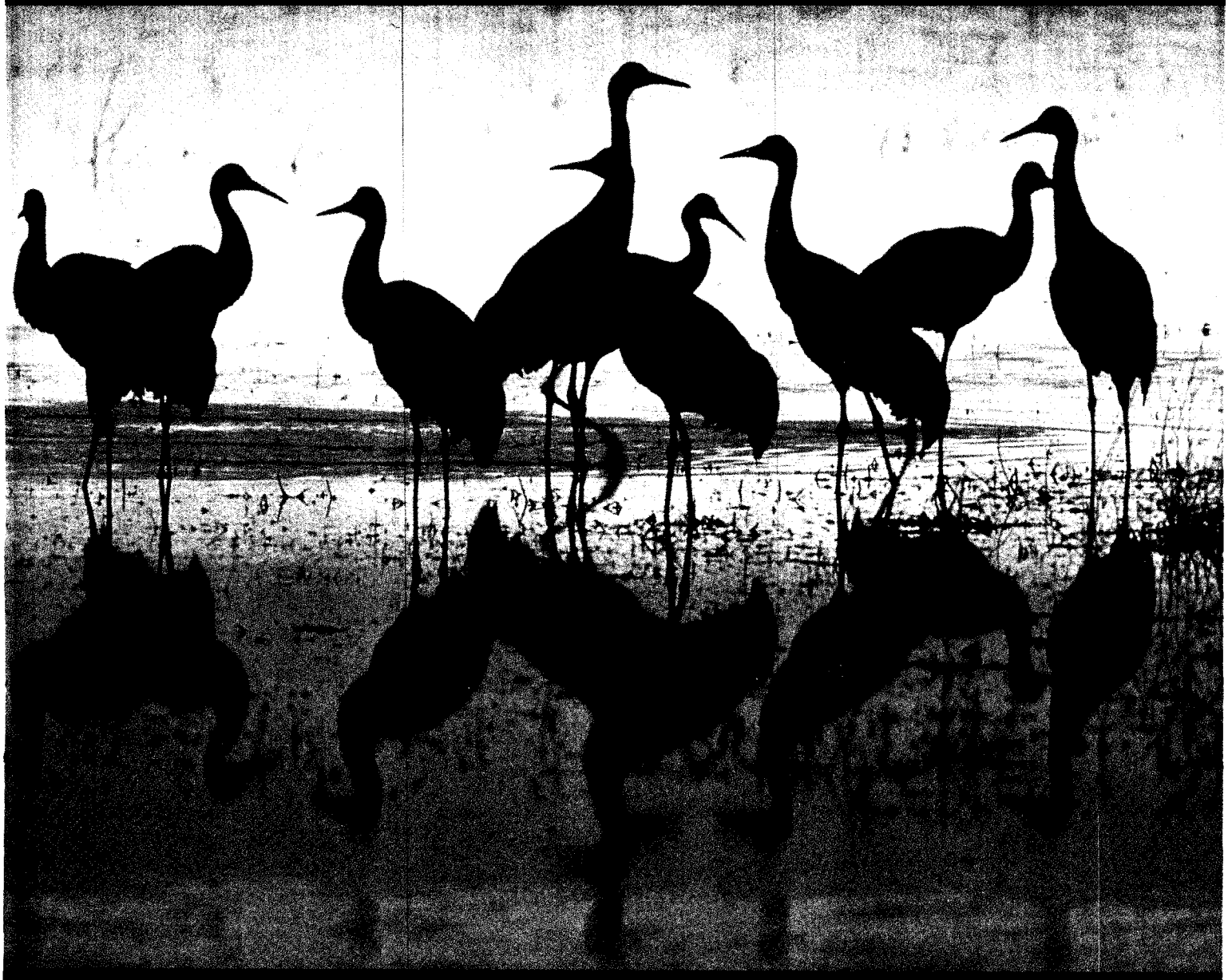

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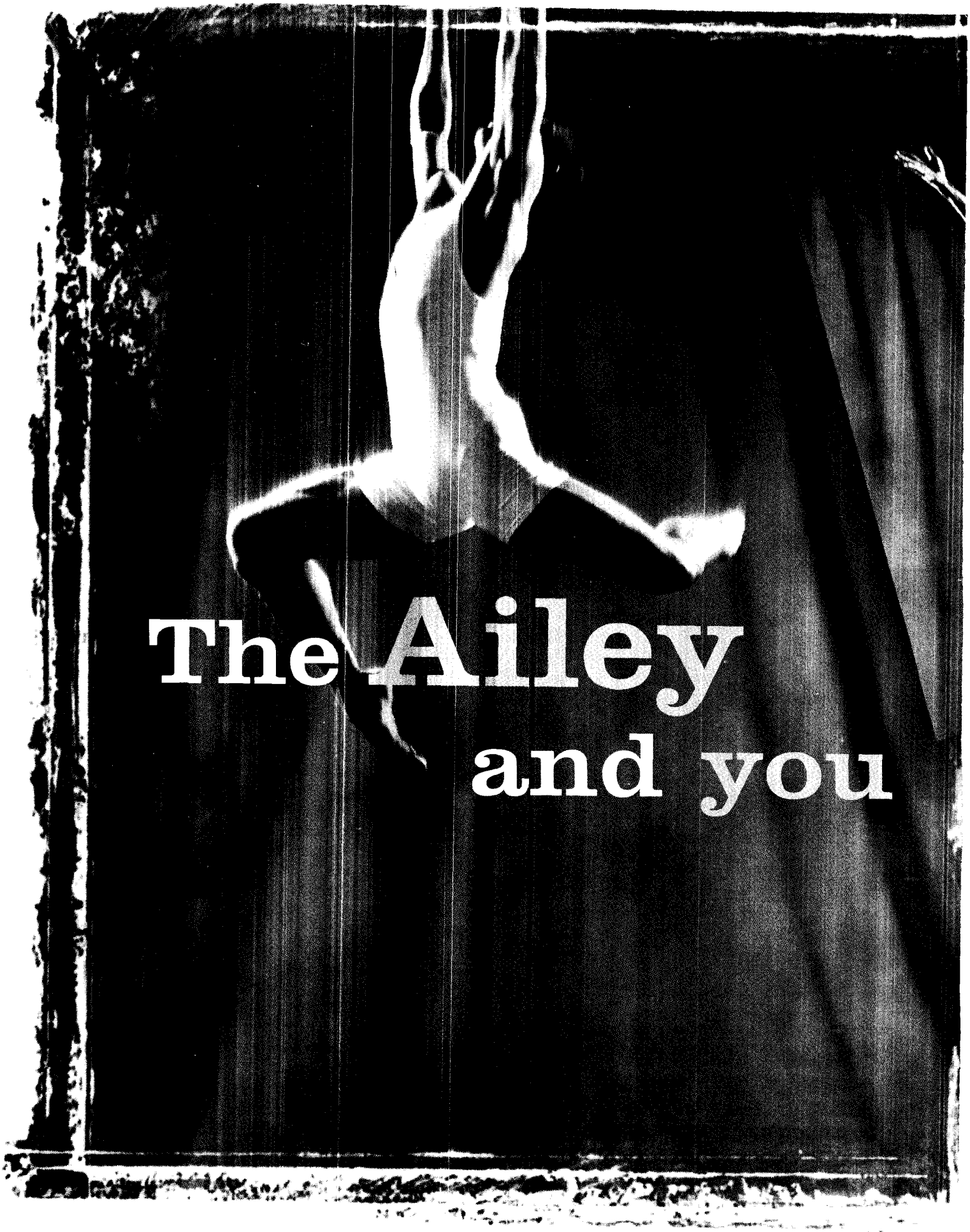

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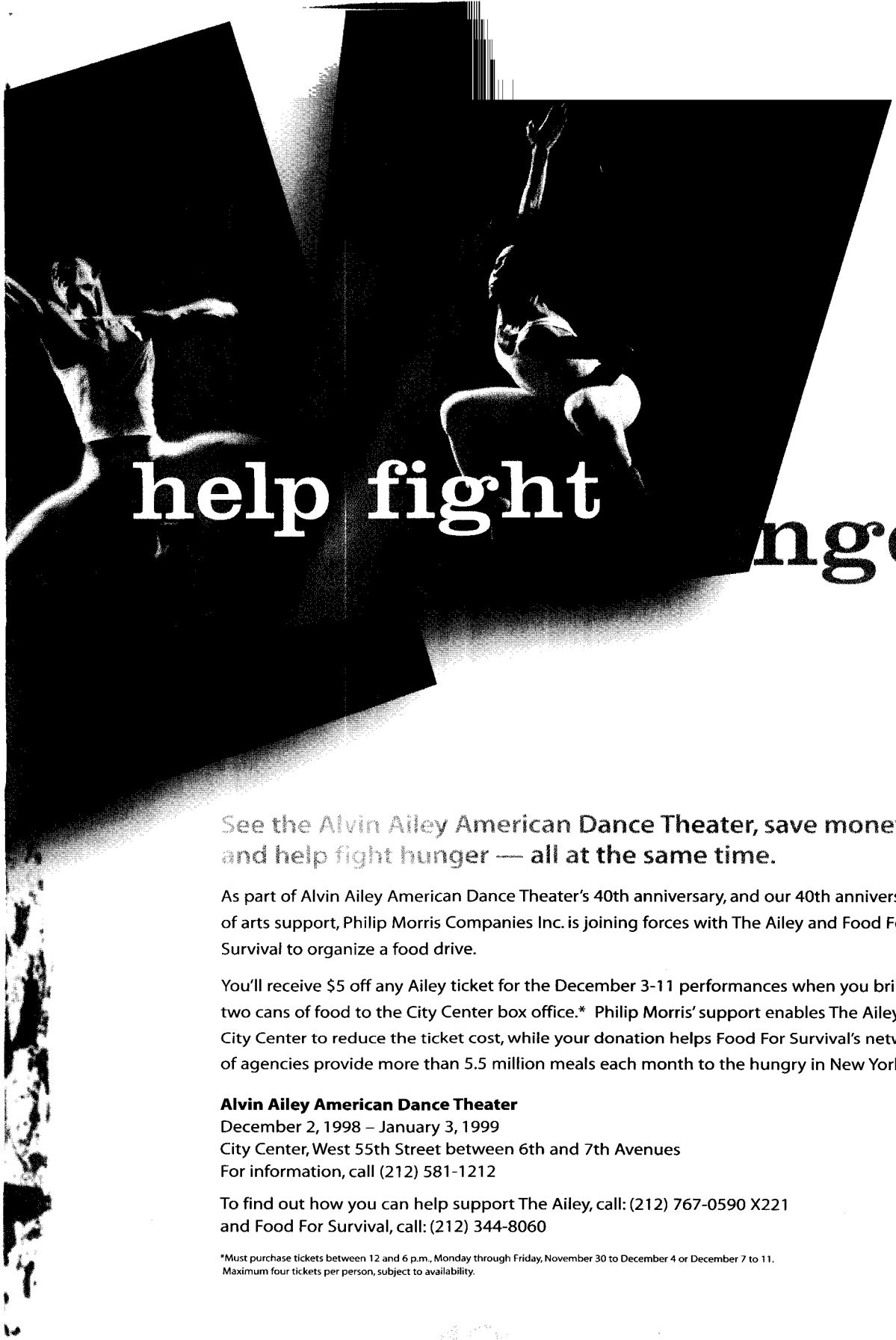

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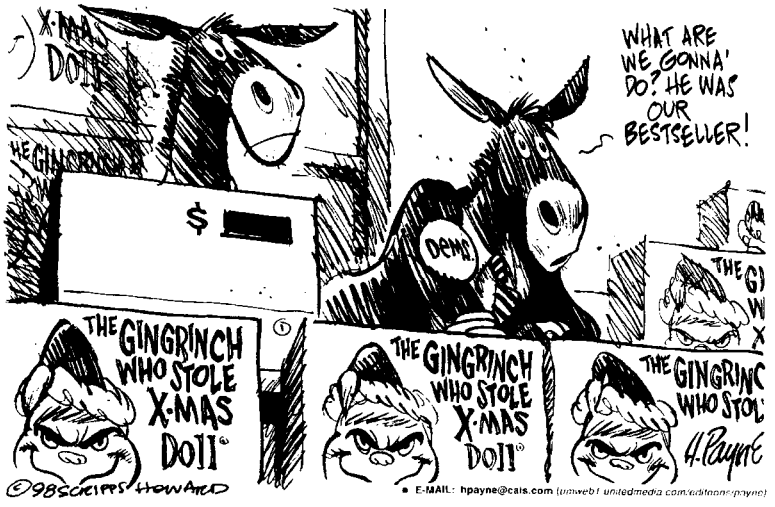
THE WEEK

■ Newt Gingrich woke up the day after the election and found a dinosaur head next to his pillow.

■ The case for impeachment has not lost force since the elections, but the momentum behind it has. Since the House looks unlikely to impeach and the Senate even less likely to convict, many Republicans are tempted to let the issue die in the Judiciary Committee. If they do, they will have decided, in effect, that there are no charges that might possibly warrant indictment of President Clinton—that the House should not consider asking the Senate to consider the charges, indeed that the charges should not even be drawn up. The alternative would be to risk an honorable defeat in a vote of the full House. That way congressmen, and the Republican Party corporately, could go on record defending the rule of law, which might, after all, come back in fashion. And an up-or-down vote on impeachment would be far better than a pointless, and probably unconstitutional, resolution of censure. The most unsatisfactory outcome would be to weaken the presidency for the sake of this president.



■ Paula Corbin Jones abandoned her suit against President Clinton for unwanted sexual advances after he agreed to pay her $850,000. She dropped her demand for an apology on the grounds that, post-Lewinsky, who could doubt her account of the matter? The suit was bothersome from the beginning. Though Clinton's behavior was gross, her claim that her rebuff cost her later promotions was shaky. Not content to restrict itself to such points, the Clinton legal team shifted into its special mode of vituperation and denial, calling Mrs. Jones a "trailer park" type, and finally sending the President out to offer the dishonest testimony which brought him into Ken Starr's clutches. Leon Panetta, a former Clinton chief of staff, called the suit "a terrible precedent for future presidents." At least for future presidents who behave like goats, defame those they have annoyed, and lie under oath.

■ Lawrence Walsh take note. Ken Starr brought new indictments and delivered more material to Congress days *after* an election. The latest indictment of Webster Hubbell accuses him of deceiving federal agencies about his and Hillary Rodham Clinton's role in the sham Castle Grande real-estate project. If the allegations are true, Clinton allies had a compelling motive to pay Hubbell hundreds of thousands of dollars in hush money. Starr has also given Congress more evidence that Clinton lied about the Kathleen Willey affair. But the Clintons have slipped nooses much tighter than these before (see William Saletan's "Scandal Bust," page 22, for one explanation of their success). Credit Ken Starr with being an intrepid soldier, fighting in an increasingly futile cause.

■ New York Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan announced that his career in the Senate would end in 2000, after 24 years. His first election, in 1976, posed a problem for this journal. The incumbent, Sen. James Buckley, was, for reasons both personal and political, the "sainted junior senator." But Moynihan was a voice of tough-mindedness and sense in a party that sorely needed them. He had written with realism on race, spoken courageously at the United Nations, and had not been afraid to work for liberalism's Antichrist, Richard Nixon. Perhaps, it seemed at the time, he could lead his party to better things, and make it the unlikely vehicle for national reform. Moynihan won, and while major articles continued to issue from him—his essay "Defining Deviancy Down," written early in the Clinton era for *The Public Interest*, is looking more prescient by the day—his political impact was nugatory. The bold initiatives were not taken, the bright thoughts never migrated from the essay to the hustings. He will leave the memory of a keen mind, a sparkling presence, and a great opportunity missed.

■ On at least one issue Speaker-presumptive Bob Livingston represents an improvement over his predecessor: English language policy. Livingston, whose adopted daughter is Chinese, has gone out of his way to oppose bilingual educa-

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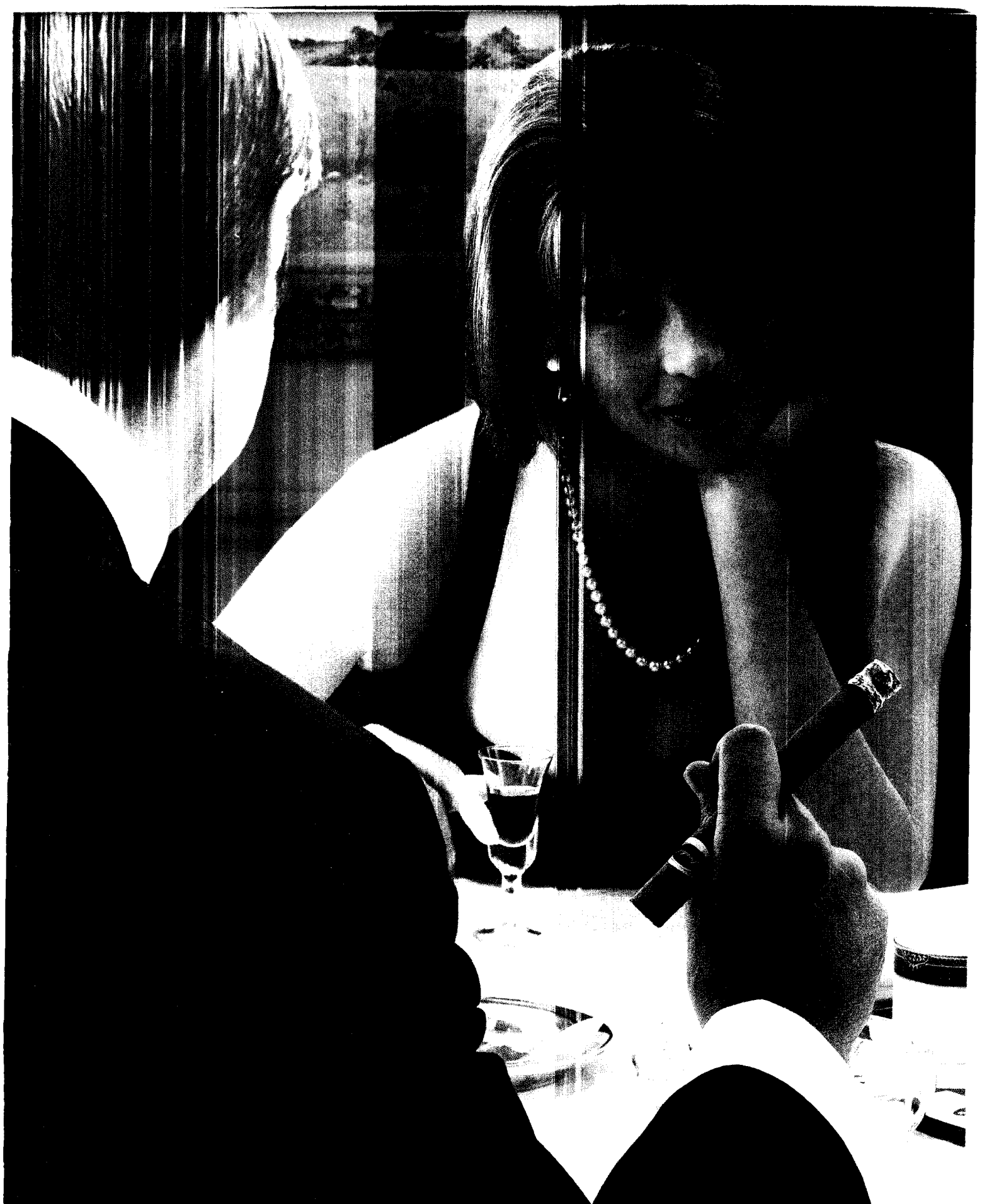

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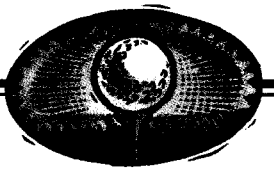

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tion. Last summer, he even testified against it while a bill of his was on the House floor. Moreover, Livingston actively opposed the bill for Puerto Rican statehood that passed the House by one vote in March. (Gingrich was strongly in favor of making Puerto Rico the 51st state.) If this is Livingston's vaunted "pragmatism," let's have more of it.

■ On the other hand, Gingrich's departure from Congress represents a loss on foreign policy that even the Administration will regret. Gingrich's training as an historian led him to be a forceful advocate of American global leadership. On some issues—the Mexican bailout, International Monetary Fund support—he was too quick to accede to liberal specifications of what that leadership entailed. But on a range of issues, from trade liberalization to NATO enlargement to restoring our defense budget, Gingrich was an indispensable voice for conservative internationalism in a Republican Party with occasional isolationist and protectionist impulses. In this respect, Bob Livingston would do well to follow the example of his predecessor.

■ The Clinton Administration signed the Kyoto global-warming treaty at a UN conference in Buenos Aires. It thus pledged to issue new regulations raising federal energy-efficiency standards and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases. The Senate, however, is demanding that developing countries agree to restrict their emissions, too, before the U.S. joins the pact. So Assistant Secretary of State Stuart Eizenstat is explaining that the signing was only a "symbolic" step aimed at ensuring U.S. leadership in the process. Critics suspect that the Administration's real aim is to implement the treaty without ratification under the cover of the Vienna Convention, which holds that signing an international treaty commits a nation to pursuing ratification and not undermining the treaty's goals. The impropriety of such a course would be squared by the fact that the Senate never ratified the Vienna Convention either.

■ The International Monetary Fund is planning to send a mission to Iraq and is considering Iraqi requests for technical assistance. "Despite the existence of tension and friction between Iraq and the United Nations," an IMF official explained to an Arab newspaper based in London, "I think we are moving towards a form of normalization with it." Finally—a secret plot to bring Saddam Hussein to his knees.

■ State attorneys general usually take a dim view of anti-competitive behavior, but they are happy to endorse it if the bribe is big enough. Under a plan announced on November 16, they will drop their lawsuits against four tobacco companies in exchange for $206 billion. To cover the cost of the deal, the companies—Philip Morris, R. J. Reynolds, Brown & Williamson, and Lorillard—are expected to raise cigarette prices by at least 35 cents a pack. They have also agreed to give up outdoor ads, cartoon characters, most sporting-event sponsorships, and promotional items imprinted with brand logos. Companies that do not sign on, including small and foreign firms, will be free of these restrictions. Philip Morris, et al., will deserve whatever damage such renegades can do to their market shares. The deal circumvents not only democratic debate but constitutional limitations: the speech restrictions in the tobacco deal, which apply to lobbying as well as advertising, would not survive a First Amendment challenge if they were imposed by statute. In agreeing to censor themselves, the cigarette makers show they are no more committed to free speech than the attorneys general are to free competition.

■ Death-penalty opponents are attempting to persuade the American people that there are widespread "executions of the innocent" by parading before the credulous national media 28 persons convicted of capital crimes but subsequently released from prison. If anything, their cases show that the death penalty is not being applied to innocents—after all, they themselves have not been executed. The myriad opportunities for appellate and habeas corpus review provided by the system are designed to correct errors and to identify death-row prisoners for whom there is any reasonable doubt about guilt. Even the most determined opponents of capital punishment have been unable to prove a single mistaken execution in the U.S. in this century. And against the tragic possibility of wrongful execution must be weighed the substantially larger, and more certain, number of lives lost when incarcerated killers kill again (either while in prison or after having escaped or been paroled). We must also weigh the innocent lives spared by the deterrent effect of capital punishment—even if they don't make for good photo-ops.

■ In Chicago, delegates to the General Assembly of the National Council of Churches approved a policy statement opposing school vouchers. One problem with voucher programs, explains the NCC, is that some parents would want to send their kids to parochial schools, which "have a pervasive sectarian character; indeed, it is for that reason that parents choose them for their children!" The delegates make a good point—those nuns can be so religious!—though it is difficult to see why churches would be against faith-based education. One delegate proposed to go farther, suggesting that NCC members "walk the talk" by promising to enroll their own children in public schools. This proposal was politely dismissed, the moral burden to support public schools apparently resting only on low-income families.

■ Partly in the interest of not stifling young love, statutory-rape laws have been left languishing in many states. In its recent report, *Statutory Rape: When Adults Prey Sexually Upon Children*, the Massachusetts Family Institute highlights some results. Adult men, most of them in their twenties and thirties, father about two-thirds of all babies of

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unmarried teenage girls. In California, three of four babies of high-school girls are fathered by adults; men over age 25 account for twice as many births among junior-high girls as minor boys. Thanks to Gov. Pete Wilson's crackdown, 1,916 men were prosecuted in California last year. Of the defendants, 63 per cent were over age twenty, another 15 per cent over age thirty. Of the victims, 53 per cent were under sixteen and another 16 per cent were under fourteen. Maybe giving schoolboys condoms isn't the answer after all.

■ Bob Kane, the creator of Batman, died at the age of 83. Batman and Superman, as the Irish journalist Martin Sieff points out, are twin poles of the American psyche. Superman is the New Deal hero—the can-do immigrant from Krypton, with the working-stiff alter ego. His is the story we like to tell of ourselves. Batman, by contrast, reflects a much darker view of things. Bruce Wayne is an old-stock millionaire who saw his parents murdered by the riff-raff of corrupt Gotham, and now fights crime in the shadows. If Henry Adams had been a cartoon hero, he would have been Batman. When optimism cloys, we can always turn to the Caped Crusader. Thanks for the paradigm, Mr. Kane.

■ James W. Tuttleton died on November 6 at age 64. As a critic and longtime professor at New York University, he possessed wide learning, high intelligence, and absolute integrity. He published regularly in *The New Criterion*, *The American Scholar*, and other journals. His *Novel of Manners in America* appeared in 1972, followed by the important essay collections *Vital Signs* (1996) and *A Fine Silver Thread* (1998). A fourth volume, on black American literature, is in preparation. His range was formidable. When provoked, he could be devastating, as in his famous essay on the deconstructionist Jacques Derrida entitled "Jacques et Moi." Why M. Derrida has not changed his name and gone into another line of work remains a mystery. James W. Tuttleton, R I P.

■ By caving in to Bill Clinton once again, Saddam Hussein has broken the record previously held by the Republican Party.

No Agenda, No Focus

Bill Clinton is the Yo-yo;
Saddam controls the string.
The President's been bounced around
Since Bush's desert sting.
Each buildup costs a billion,
In Stealths and Tomahawks;
But Baghdad has become so bored,
Nobody ever gawks.

—W. H. von Dreele

THE REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP

Speaker No More

BROADWAY musicals traditionally tested first in Boston or Philadelphia, where songs would be added or dropped, and the book rewritten, sometimes heavily. After last month's elections, the House GOP, instead of rethinking its message, changed the cast.

Bob Livingston, the new Speaker, is a cautious establishmentarian of conservative disposition. As far as the structure of the House is concerned, he will probably cede more power to committee chairmen. There has been talk, in previous House crises, of a Henry Hyde option—turning the Speakership over to that other twenty-year veteran, while putting serious struggles off into the future. Livingston is the Hyde option: an Old Bull caretaker.

It is a measure of Newt Gingrich's impact that the story of his fall is more absorbing than the question of his successor. The outgoing Speaker rose to his post with the blessing of this magazine. When he fought for the post of Minority Whip in 1989, he distributed copies of *NR*'s endorsement of him on the House floor and credited it with helping him win. After George Bush's defeat in 1992, he was one of the panelists at *NR*'s first Washington conference and said the spirit of that meeting inspired him. Two years later, when, against all odds, the GOP captured the House, he took the time to keep a commitment to appear on our first cruise to join the celebration.

But the weird edges—that Gingrichian fusion of Mr. Wizard and Nostradamus—were there all along. The new Speaker's reading list for the freshmen of the 104th Congress was a revealing hybrid: half classics of the Founding (the *Federalist Papers*, James Flexner's biography of George Washington), half modern gibberish (the Tofflers, assorted management gurus). Gingrich's more gaudy visions of the day after tomorrow distracted him from the political problems and opportunities of today: the entrenched regime of racial quotas; immigration and the decrystallization of American culture; the war on the military culture.

Tireless and imaginative in pursuit of power, the new Speaker had only one plan of action once he had acquired it: the Contract with America. The failure of one Contract item (the Balanced Budget Amendment) led Congress to try, in 1995, to balance the budget all by itself, which led to the famous budget deadlock and governmental shutdown (see "Lost Opportunity Society," page 44, for details). After that, the cupboard was bare. All of his other debacles—the book advance, the bad trip on Air Force One, the ethics fight—

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would have meant little if he had had some Plan B. He didn't.

With him, also passes a recent notion of conservative political leadership: that the big prize is Congress, not the White House. Probably it was always quixotic. There has not been a true national leader in the Speaker's chair since Henry Clay in the 1810s and 1820s. The models that Gingrich discussed—Sam Rayburn, Thomas Reed, Joseph Cannon—were potent men, but not definers of the debate in the way that Gingrich wanted to be. The effective congressional leaders of our age are managers and movers, not shakers. Conservative energies will revert to the forum that long monopolized them—the chase for the White House. And the wide-open field for 2000 will give them plenty of running room.

THE POLICY DEBATE

Without Issue

REPUBLICANS have concluded from the disappointing election returns that they must run on issues. This conclusion is surely correct, though it comes at a time when it will be difficult for congressional Republicans to act on it. With such a tiny House majority—not the smallest in history, as we feared last issue, but the smallest since 1955—the GOP can't send many conservative bills to President Clinton's desk and thus get vetoes that clarify the parties' positions. And even if that immediate problem were solved, a deeper one would remain:

■ REMEMBERING REAGAN ■

Local Hero

TAMPICO, ILL.—It takes about a minute to slow down and drive through Tampico, where Route 172 briefly turns into Main Street for about six blocks before picking up again. A 14-mile detour off Interstate 80 in the northwest part of Illinois, Tampico (pronounced "TAM-pick-oh") doesn't show up on a lot of maps. About 800 people live here surrounded by corn and soybean fields, and the town looks like any number of tiny farm communities in the Midwest.

But there's a difference—something that makes most travelers want to hit their brakes and pause for a few moments. Tampico, as a red-white-and-blue welcome sign proudly proclaims, is the birthplace of Ronald Reagan. A visit to this town is a powerful reminder that, in America, the greatest leaders often come from the humblest origins. Lincoln has his log cabin, Reagan his second-story apartment above a bakery.

The fortieth President was born here on February 6, 1911. Four days later, the local paper made the first printed reference to the man who would win the Cold War: "John Reagan has been calling thirty-seven inches a yard and giving seventeen ounces for a pound this week at Pitney's store, he has been feeling so jubilant over the arrival of a ten-pound boy Monday." The family later moved down the street to a small house. Tampico was Reagan's home for nearly 5 years.

Today, the Ronald Reagan Birthplace is a landmark maintained by a band of loyal locals who also run the Tampico Historical Society. Since February, when the birthplace opened for the first time on a daily basis, more than 2,220 men and women have stopped by, including travelers from as far away as Thailand and Bulgaria. "People almost feel like they're in a sacred place when they come here," says Amy McElhiney, president of the historical society.

Visitors can stand in the room where Reagan came into the world, examine the period furniture and wallpaper, and see the window to a connecting apartment where Reagan's mother would hand her boy to a neighbor when she had to carry groceries upstairs. Mrs. McElhiney and her husband Lloyd usually lead the tours, and they lavish attention upon people stopping by. Both of them can spin out dozens of tales about Reagan's early life in Tampico. "This is where he acquired his small-town values," says Mrs. McElhiney.

Reagan returned to Tampico in 1992, and he toured the apartment and a small museum next door that contains Gipper paraphernalia. "They've got more movie posters than we do," he said to Nancy as they walked around the room full of old photographs, biographies, and Reagan's 4th-grade report card. (He earned all A's and B's; "We probably would not have displayed it otherwise," explains Mrs. McElhiney.) They also ate at the Dutch Diner, just a few doors down from where "Dutch" was born.

Admission to the birthplace is free, although visitors are encouraged to give donations to this small-budget operation or to buy a memento. Among the items for sale is a 25-cent postcard of a photo Mr. McElhiney took on the evening of November 3, 1980. It shows the row of red brick buildings along Tampico's Main Street. The sky is gray, but at the center of the photo the sun pierces through rain clouds and lights up Reagan's birthplace. A rainbow shines down from above, hitting it directly. "Almost like Providence," says Mr. McElhiney.

The next day, Ronald Reagan was elected President.

VISITOR INFORMATION: THE RONALD REAGAN BIRTHPLACE IS LOCATED AT 111 SOUTH MAIN ST. IN TAMPICO, ILL. IT IS OPEN MONDAY–SATURDAY FROM 10 A.M. TO 4 P.M., AND ON SUNDAYS FROM 1 P.M. TO 4 P.M. THE PHONE NUMBER IS (815) 438-2130. THE BIRTHPLACE WILL BE OPEN BY APPOINTMENT ONLY IN DECEMBER AND JANUARY; VISITORS SHOULD CALL AMY OR LLOYD MCELHINEY AT (815) 438-6175. NEARBY IN DIXON, ILL., A SMALL FOUNDATION PRESERVES THE RONALD REAGAN BOYHOOD HOME, RENTED BY HIS FAMILY BETWEEN 1920 AND 1923. THAT PHONE NUMBER IS (815) 288-3404 OR (815) 288-5176. —JOHN J. MILLER

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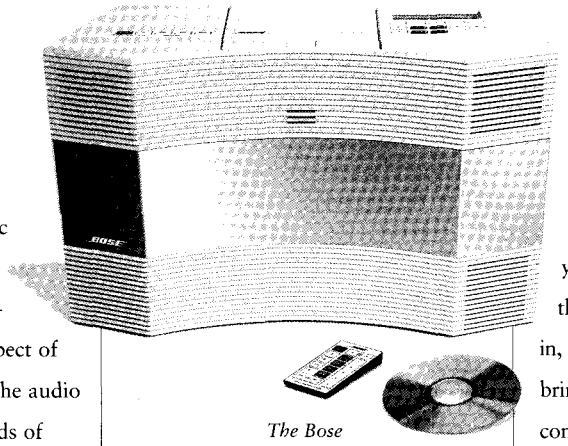

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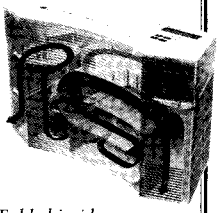

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the public does not like the Republicans' positions on a host of key issues, from education to health care to entitlements.

Part of the reason these positions are unpopular is that they are Republican positions. Polls have shown for years that conservative policy prescriptions that command majority support cease to do so when they are described as Republican proposals. Democrats are thought to have a more genuine concern for environmental protection than Republicans—perhaps because they generally do—and also to have a greater concern for ordinary people. The public thinks Democrats understand the needs of families, which trumps the Republicans' advantage on family values.

These perceptions are rooted in reality: the Republican Party in the 1990s has seemed oddly detached from American life, at least at the national level. Led by professors, Republicans have launched crusade after crusade—for balanced budgets, CBO scoring, tax reform—whose importance to most people is not immediately apparent. When discussing education policy, Republicans have stressed the evils of bureaucracy and the virtues of federalism and competition. Democrats, on the other hand, have talked about what a classroom should look like (fewer students and sturdy walls). The right answer to the wrong question will always lose out to the wrong answer to a better one. A pre-election *New York Times* poll gave the Democrats a twenty-point lead on education.

The relevance of crime control to individual voters does not require explication, and this issue has been an advantage for Republicans since the late Sixties. But that advantage has shrunk to almost nothing, and there is not much they can do about it. The Democratic Party, the party of government, has a natural advantage on the entitlements it created. Republicans should have a corresponding natural advantage on taxes, but their missteps have allowed Democrats to pull even. Without tax cuts to offer voters, it is a wonder Republicans have done as well as they have.

Republicans have offered the right policies on health care: medical savings accounts and other devices to correct the tax code's bias against individual control of health policies. But they have not understood the urgency of the issue, assuming that the status quo of managed care is tolerable and can survive indefinitely. In fact, such corporate rationing is bound to generate increasing discontent, to which our politics is bound to respond with increasing regulations. Republicans are then left advocating positions in which they do not really believe, defending either regulation or HMOs. And national health care gets ever closer. Republicans need to stop treating health policy as an irritant to which they must react and start taking the lead with conservative proposals.

To build a governing majority, Republicans must explain how they would govern and what difference it would make—which in turn requires that they tailor their politics to meet the challenges now facing Americans. Such tailoring should not mean slavish obedience to polls. Rebuilding our defenses, and erecting defenses against missiles, is an issue whose importance Republicans should be prepared to explain to a complacent electorate. Nor should Republicans base their appeals purely on narrow self-interest: abolishing racial preferences and restricting immigration are steps designed to restore a sense of national identity, which is in our national interest. Appeals to self-interest, however, have their place. Republicans should reclaim the tax issue by offering voters, not tax reform, not tax fairness, but tax cuts.

In other words, Republicans can either start paying more attention to Americans, or get used to Americans' not paying attention to them.

A Flood Warning

When the ark got moving,
Noah had his mitts,
Wrapped around a drill book
Put out by Berlitz;
God had cautioned Noah
Hebrew wouldn't go,
So he turned bi-lingual
Like George W.

—W. H. von Dreele

THE IRAQI CRISIS

Sand Trap

In Iraq, President Clinton trumpeted another ephemeral tactical victory while presiding over a strategic retreat. Saddam Hussein miscalculated in attempting a wholesale shutdown of the international inspections that monitor Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Even his usual claque of supporters—Russia, France, China, and some Arab countries—could not defend this; most key nations ended up either supporting or acquiescing in military action. An Administration that worships international consensus suddenly found itself with one. A formidable military force was being assembled, including B-52s. At the eleventh hour, Saddam Hussein backed down and allowed inspections to resume.

But Hussein's setback is temporary, and far less substantial than his gains over the last year. The inspections have suffered too many temporary shutdowns, obstructions, and harassment for the status quo ante to be retrieved. The Iraqi regime's scientists have hardly taken the year off. Within a few months, it is a certainty that Hussein will find another excuse to disrupt inspections. On previous occasions, when he did not challenge inspections *tout court*, he had far more diplomatic support than he did this time. Next time, it will be difficult for the United States to re-create the brief moment of international consensus in favor of serious action—both because of fatigue and because of mounting doubts about American seriousness.

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45	$ 260	$ 335	$ 395	$ 548	$ 585
50	$ 378	$ 500	$ 600	$ 863	$ 915
55	$ 568	$ 758	$ 865	$ 1,805	$ 2,810
60	$ 908	$ 1,130	$ 1,365	$ 4,100	$ 4,100
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The only policy that can eliminate the threat Hussein poses is to bring his military–socialist regime to an end. The Republican Congress, in its Iraq Liberation Act, urged the President to back an armed opposition to Hussein, and the President seemed to adopt this line in his November 15 remarks. Yet his own bureaucracy does not believe in it and won't implement it with any conviction. So watch this space: we'll be going over this ground again soon enough.

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ **Dear Mr. Buckley:**
Florence King scored a bull's-eye (as usual) with her "Notes & Asides" blurb [Oct. 26] re: Josiah Bunting, Superintendent of the Virginia Military Institute. A self-made man, who worships his Maker, if there ever was one.

VMI's "ethos"—a favorite Buntingism—was always to make gentlemen of boys. Its new mission must be either to make gentlemen of girls or to abandon its ethos altogether. In either case, it is pathetic to witness any further evidence, as if more were needed, that we live in a trashy age.

Ask Bunting, though, and he'll tell you he's making lemonade from lemons. Getting the best he can under the circumstances. Maybe . . . but the true VMI accepted no compromise and set no goal short of the absolute best. Today, hundreds of colleges can achieve what the ersatz VMI is capable of achieving without all the pretense—what Bunting has labeled the "Gilbert & Sullivan" trappings of a military college. VMI now stands for "Vaguely Military Institute."

Very truly yours,
Laurence W. Dempsey
VMI, Class of 1970
Dallas, Tex.

Dear Mr. Dempsey:
Will you vaguely win future military confrontations?
Cordially, WFB

Dear Mr. Buckley:
In your last "Notes & Asides," in response to Florence King's suggestion re: the appropriate action for the president of a certain, formerly all male, Southern military academy, you queried her as to the appropriate "grand gesture" that President Clinton might make. It is obvious that the President is incapable of a grand gesture.

On the other hand, his *eminence gris* and professional sycophant James Carville, being of the same Louisiana French-Catholic heritage as my children, could make the grand gesture by becoming, in this crisis of the royal household, the man for all seasons. Specifically, I suggest that Carville have an attack on *Larry King Live* wherein he denounces the President, after which he is summoned to the White House where he is held for high treason and taken at once to Hilton Head Island, where he will be held until the Renaissance Weekend, at which time he will be beheaded. Is this grand enough for Miss King?

Very truly yours,
Gregory Thomas
Houston, Tex.

Dear Mr. Thomas:
Oh I'd guess so. Miss King makes very moderate demands.
Cordially, WFB

■ **Dear Bill:**
The enclosed story in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* might arouse those of your readers who are indifferent to a category of hate crime:

"A Madison man was charged with aggravated battery Wednesday in the beating of a man dressed in women's clothing.

However, authorities said they could not charge him with a hate crime because cross-dressers are not members of a group protected under the state's hate-crime law. A hate crime charged as an enhancement to another offense can add five years to a prison sentence.

'There has been a general assumption that someone who might be a cross-dresser might also fall under one of the protected groups,' said Madison police spokesman Phil Moore."

Cordially,
Tom
(Thomas Reeves, Univ. of Wisconsin)

■ To: WFB
From: Ed Capano
Re: Redesign

Bill, did you see this in the media column of the *New York Post*?

"Magazine makeovers often make things worse. This is very much not the case with Richard Lowry's revamped NATIONAL REVIEW. The new look that debuts in the conservative magazine this week is a triumph. Sure, the crisp, clean layout with its sans-serif heads and pull-quotes and its bolder typeface still needs a little rejigging, but it makes a big difference to NR's whole feel and does justice at last to the . . . writing that is the magazine's strength."

Dear Ed:
Yes indeed. Our new design is quite popular. I think it's terrific.
Congratulations, Bill

■ **Dear Mr. Buckley:**
I enjoyed your column "Powerball Schmowerball!" [Sept. 1], and like you I tired very quickly of the incessant television and print media coverage.

But I hope I am not the first to question your quote from a "statistician" that the chance . . . is about 1 in 80 million. "It would be likelier . . . to shoot 20 consecutive holes-in-one."

Well, the chance for an average golfer at a hole-in-one is one in 8,000. Two in a row are pretty easy to calculate—1 in 8,000 x 8,000—1 in 64 million. Three in a row are 1 in 8,000 x 8,000 x 8,000—512 billion. . . . As you can see, three would be many times too big, and 20 times? It's likely his calculator is broken, or maybe he is misquoted (2 times would be about right), or perhaps he is not much of a statistician.

Kelly Karasek
San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Miss Karasek:
You are entirely convincing. I did not make up the figure but I happily pass along your warning to others not to quote it.
Cordially,

—WFB

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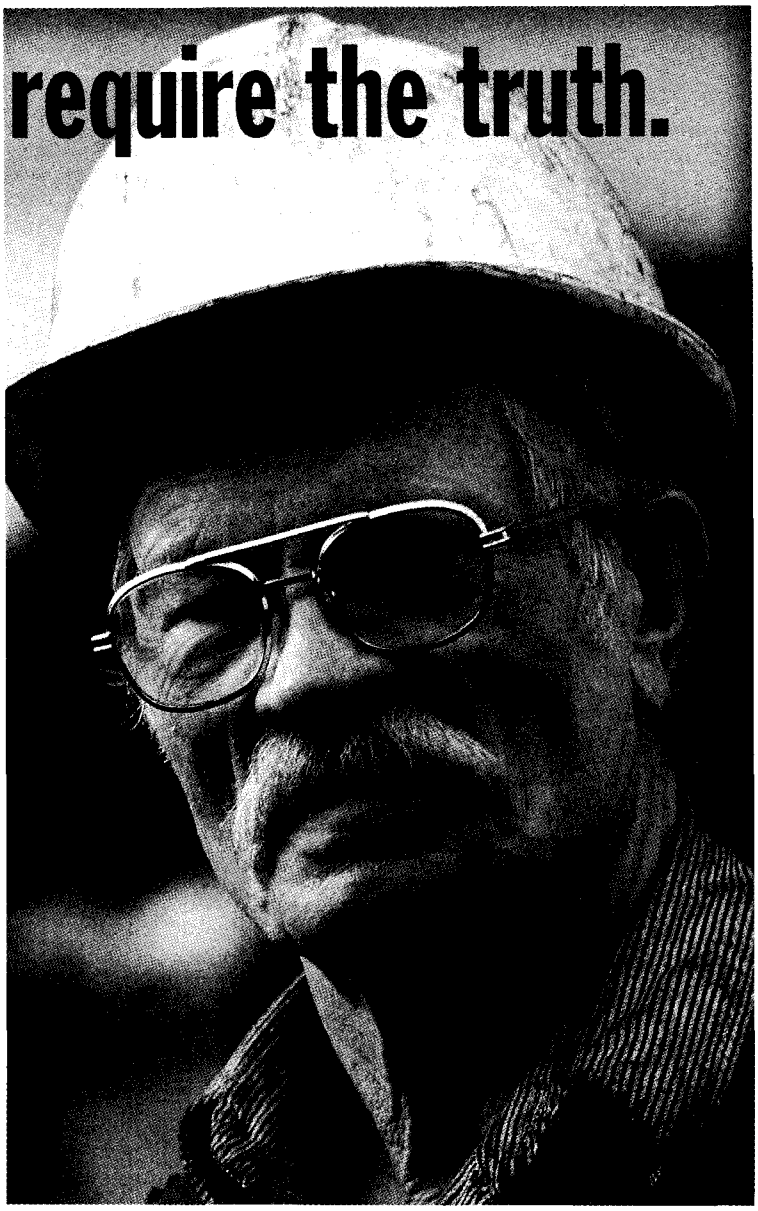

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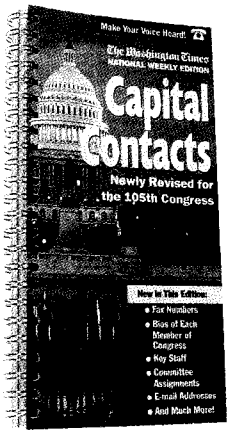

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■ RECRIMINATIONS ■

Party Time

Should conservatives start their own party?

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

THE *U.S. News & World Report* headline said it all: "Can Bush Save the GOP?" Here is a political party so demoralized as to accept the media spins that it lost the election it actually won, that its "defeat" is the result of embracing hard-right social policies and non-mainstream conservative candidates it sedulously avoided, and that it can be saved only by a governor who gained a majority of Latino voters by his "inclusive" politics when he didn't.

These illusions can be exploded easily enough. In the national vote for the House of Representatives, Republicans won half a million more votes than Democrats. In close Senate elections, moderate Republicans like Matt Fong lost winnable races (and in Fong's case, the Asian vote) quite as often as did conservatives like Ellen Sauerbrey and Dan Lungren, both of whom, as it happens, ran away from conservatism in the course of their campaigns. And although Bush won a landslide 69 per cent of all voters, he gained only 49 per cent of Hispanics, despite using a Spanish language commercial with the tag line: "Vote for Bush—Who cares if he's not a Democrat?" This sort of reverse inclusiveness may confirm the insight that the Republicans have a choice: they can either change their policy on immigration or change all their other policies. It is hardly the prescription for a national victory.

Since Reagan left office, however, the GOP establishment has shown an ineradicable will to believe that moderates win elections and conservatives lose them. Whatever arguments or evidence are brought to bear—the victories of Reagan and Bush '88, the defeats of Ford, Dole, and Bush '92—Republicans will not be shaken. In recent days, President Ford and Senator Dole, both of whom might have been restrained by embarrassment alone, have argued the cause of moderation. And while "me-tooism" might have seemed a pragmatic strategy when liberal Democrats were regularly winning elections, the fashion for it in the face of conservative successes argues a collective neurosis.

But if this ideological timidity is a post-Reagan condition, how is 1994 to be explained? How did a morally enfeebled GOP conceive and carry through the bold reforms of the Contract with America? The answer is simple: Ross Perot conceived them. Review the major items for a moment: a balanced budget, welfare reform, a hint of term limits, and parliamentary rules forcing Congress to obey the various regulations it had passed for the rest of us. With the exception of welfare reform, these were originally advanced by Perot in his apparently quixotic 1992 campaign. Newt Gingrich shrewdly picked them up and passed them into law, and Bill Clinton entrenched them permanently by supporting them in the 1996 election. But little in the Contract was a priority for *Wall Street Journal* conservatives or for traditionalists, and the conservative issues Perot did not embrace—such as opposition to racial quotas—got nowhere.

Perot the entrepreneur had revealed unsatisfied demand in the political market. Alerted by his 19 per cent in the election, others picked up his ideas and drove the pioneer onto the sidelines. In

Gephardt, Gingrich, Clinton, Boxer, and Schumer by Roman Genn

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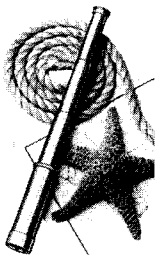

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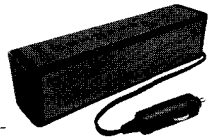

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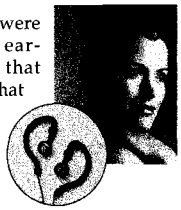

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business perhaps, that would have been a tragedy; in politics it was a triumph since it moved America in his political direction.

Nor is this of purely historical interest. Signs of unsatisfied demand in today's political marketplace abound: latent but powerful issues, insurgent movements, neglected demographic constituencies. Initiatives in California and elsewhere have shown overwhelming support for issues such as opposition to bilingual education that the nervous GOP establishment had shunned as too extreme. Insurgent political movements such as Perot's Reform Party and Pat Buchanan's America First have gained surprisingly high levels of support in prosperous times. For instance, Jesse Ventura's wild victory occurred in the state with the highest turnout (61 per cent). Where did these votes come from?

At least three demographic categories are political orphans. Kevin Phillips has pointed to the steady loss of Republican votes in the northern tier of the U.S. as deracinated WASPs—the very people who founded the GOP—drift from the party they now regard as too overtly religious, too Southern, and inexplicably hostile to their favored causes of environmentalism and population control. Minority conservatives are similarly homeless since those Republicans like Jack Kemp who try to recruit them do so by addressing them mistakenly as a liberal constituency that supports racial quotas, welfare, etc. Finally, the white working class (a/k/a Reagan Democrats) is disaffected economically from the Republicans but socially from the Democrats. Having been won briefly over to the GOP in 1994, this callused constituency is unlikely to be won back again by appeals crafted to seduce upper-class feminists.

Yet that is probably what they will be offered. The GOP is moving left ("to the Center"), and if objections are raised, the response will be that the conservatives have nowhere else to go. That is false of course, since they can always go home. But that criticism will simply be drowned out by the mantra, now being chanted ever louder.

The solution is to give conservatives somewhere else to go: namely an independent national conservative party. The first advantage of such a party is that a constituency now taken for granted would have to be wooed. Such a party could also, like Perot, pioneer those issues which the GOP either pays lip service to (racial preferences, tax cuts) or ignores entirely (English only, immigration). It would force the Republicans to move rightwards while simultaneously allowing them to seem "moderate" by comparison. And it would not be burdened with the GOP's unfortunate image as a "white male" party; indeed, it could be led by non-white conservatives, such as Ward Connerly, whose bravery has made them admired among heartland conservatives. That would help it to take more principled stands on issues involving race than the guilt-ridden Republicans can manage.

The obvious objection to this proposal is that an independent conservative party would split the Right and ensure the victory of the Left. But this objection has force only if the new party seeks to replace the GOP as the main party on the Right and competes for all national and state offices. William Rusher, an early advocate of such a party in his book *The Making of the New Majority*, abandoned his advocacy for that very reason—and because Ronald Reagan came along and made a new conservative party unnecessary.

Suppose, however, that such a party is not a contender for power, except potentially, but a philosophical ginger group independent of, but generally allied with, the GOP. It would support those Republican candidates (or occasionally Democratic candidates) who were acceptably conservative, but run its own man when the GOP nominated a liberal. The threat itself would be enough in most years. New York has had an independent conservative party on these lines for the last forty years. It has elected one Senator of its own (James Buckley), come close to electing a Governor of its own (Herb London), and had the useful general effect of keeping the Republicans somewhat honest.

New York has such a party because its election law allows cross-endorsements. The Conservative Party can therefore put up its own candidate, or advise its supporters to abstain, or endorse the Republican on its own party line—perhaps winning for him the support of conservative Democrats who could not bring themselves to pull the Republican lever. The usefulness of such cross-endorsements was recently demonstrated in dramatically negative fashion when Republican candidate Dennis Vacco (acting on the advice of his GOP consultant ("to the Center"), refused to put his name on the "Right-to-Life" line and has apparently been defeated by 20,000 votes, when all the Right-to-Life candidates got about 72,000 votes.

Of course, only ten states allow cross-endorsements. Without them, an independent party would be less able to help a genuinely conservative Republican by putting his name on the conservative line. But it would still be able to harm a liberal Republican by putting up an independent conservative against him. As a result of which, the state or local GOP would be less likely to select a liberal in the first place.

The moral seems to be that conservatives should take the high road and seek to change state electoral laws to allow cross-endorsement. Until then, however, punishing faithless Republicans remains possible, necessary, perhaps sufficient—and certainly enjoyable. **NR**

■ **RECRIMINATIONS II** ■

Scandal Bust

Why Clinton won Monicagate.

WILLIAM SALETAN

EVER since the Lewinsky story broke in January, conservatives and pundits have been prophesying Clinton's demise. Now the pundits are scratching their heads, and Newt Gingrich is scratching the stump where his head used to be.

What went wrong? Basically, conservatives underestimated Clinton's hand and overplayed their own. Their consolation is that they can learn important lessons from their mistakes.

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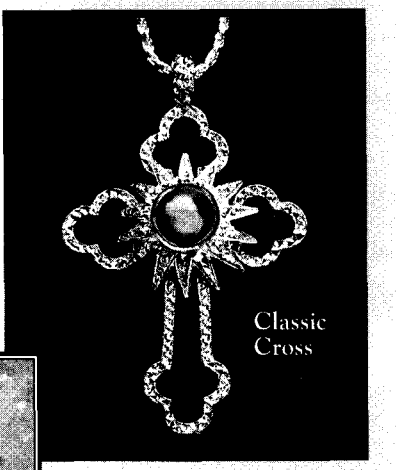

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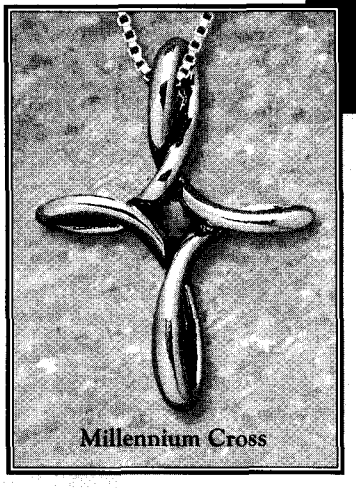
Ricardo Montalbán

-- Ricardo Montalban



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Clinton emerged as the leading Democratic presidential candidate in 1992, he was bombarded with scandals: Gennifer Flowers, the draft, Whitewater, Filegate, Travelgate, Vince Foster, the fundraising investigation, Paula Jones, Lewinsky, etc. Half of these matters ended up on Ken Starr's plate. Conservatives have hyped them all, figuring that eventually the scandals would add up to a groundswell for Clinton's removal. But the scandals didn't add up, any more than freshly printed rubles add to Russia's wealth. Instead, they lost their shock value. By the time the Lewinsky story broke, people had grown used to investigations of Clinton. Furthermore, the investigations had become increasingly associated with Starr. This made the public susceptible to the White House refrain that Starr had pursued a "four-year, $40-million investigation" that sought to nail Clinton by hook or by crook.

■

The scandals didn't add up, any more than freshly printed rubles add to Russia's wealth.

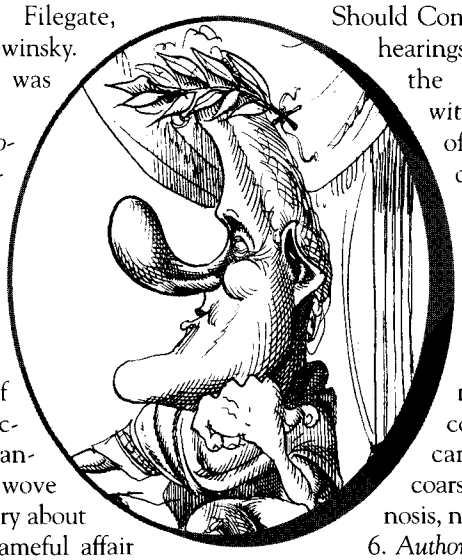
■

2. *Outrage isn't dead, but it's mortal.* When the public first heard that Clinton had sexually exploited a 21-year-old intern and lied about it under oath, Dick Morris took a poll and warned Clinton that he would lose his job if the charges were proven true. So Clinton denied the charges and stonewalled for months while his spin team reminded voters that they had elected Clinton despite knowing he was an adulterer. The media further deflated the story by noting that previous presidents had gotten away with sexual shenanigans. Gradually, the public got used to the idea that Clinton had messed up. Two weeks before he confessed, Morris told Clinton in a New York Post op-ed piece, "The last seven months have removed some of the shock and prepared people for what they suspect is the truth. What you might not have been able to say in January, you can say in August."

Mr. Saletan is senior writer for *Slate* magazine.

3. *Context matters.* From day one, James Carville and the Clinton gang tarnished Starr's investigation by saying it was "just about sex." Perjury? It was just about sex. Obstruction of justice? It was just about sex. Conservatives replied that perjury is perjury and obstruction is obstruction. It should now be clear that in the court of public opinion, conservatives lost that argument, not because they're wrong, but because it is human nature to care about context. Most people deem a lie more or less serious depending on what it's about, and sex strikes them as a less troubling context than business or politics.

Conservatives aren't to blame for losing this argument, but they are to blame for failing to recognize and adjust to the public's verdict. In particular, Starr should have enlarged the context of the cover-up charges against Clinton by delivering a joint report on Filegate, Whitewater, and Lewinsky. Instead, his report was "just about sex."



4. *Stories beat theories.* In the post-confession debate over Clinton's fate, the President's critics wove the facts of the case into legal theories about perjury, subornation of perjury, and obstruction of justice. Meanwhile, his defenders wove these facts into a story about the protagonist's shameful affair and his efforts to escape the humiliation of its exposure. Predictably, the media and the public chose the story. Starr's 445-page report dissolved into the one-sentence plot summary delivered by Clinton's attorney, David Kendall: "A man tried to keep an inappropriate relationship private." Clinton's critics, oblivious to the public's eye for narrative elements, neglected to realize that legal explanations wouldn't protect Linda Tripp from being cast as the scandal's villainess. Worse yet, they failed to understand that, from the audience's standpoint, Clinton's offenses were diminished by the absence of a victim, since Monica Lewinsky and Hillary Clinton refused to play the role. Not until the Congressional hearings began did Republican Rep. Bob Barr of Georgia lay out an alternative story with a persuasive victim: Clinton's use of deceit and presidential power to cheat Paula Jones of justice. But by then, it was too late.

5. *Popular morality is subtle.* People can be obtuse about political subjects they don't understand. But when they know a subject as well as they came to know this one, their views are nuanced. Starr and many conservatives view Clinton's behavior as patently immoral and illegal, but the public draws distinctions: just because it's wrong doesn't mean it's illegal, just because it's illegal doesn't mean it's prosecutable, and just because it's prosecutable doesn't mean it's impeachable. As the year progressed, the public's questions grew more difficult to answer in the affirmative: Did Clinton have the affair? Should it be investigated? Should the media drag it before the nation? Should Congress drag it through hearings? Starr, the press, and the GOP forged ahead with little appreciation of these escalating questions and the need to address them at each stage. In the end, when the public failed to support impeachment, many conservatives moaned about the coarsening of American culture. But the coarseness was in the diagnosis, not in the patient.

6. *Authority is dead.* The O. J. Simpson trial demonstrated that widespread suspicion of the government, exploited by the government's adversaries with increasing sophistication and boldness, has dissolved its presumption of authority. Just as Johnnie Cochran put the Los Angeles Police Department on trial, Clinton's spin artists put Ken Starr on trial. The media, increasingly disposed to investigate official misconduct, played along. When Starr submitted his report on the investigation, as required by law, the Clinton team accused him of bias and issued a counter-report that attracted huge press coverage despite being unauthorized. As Congress took up Starr's report, Democrats gutted the credibility of the proceedings by accusing Republicans of partisanship at every turn.

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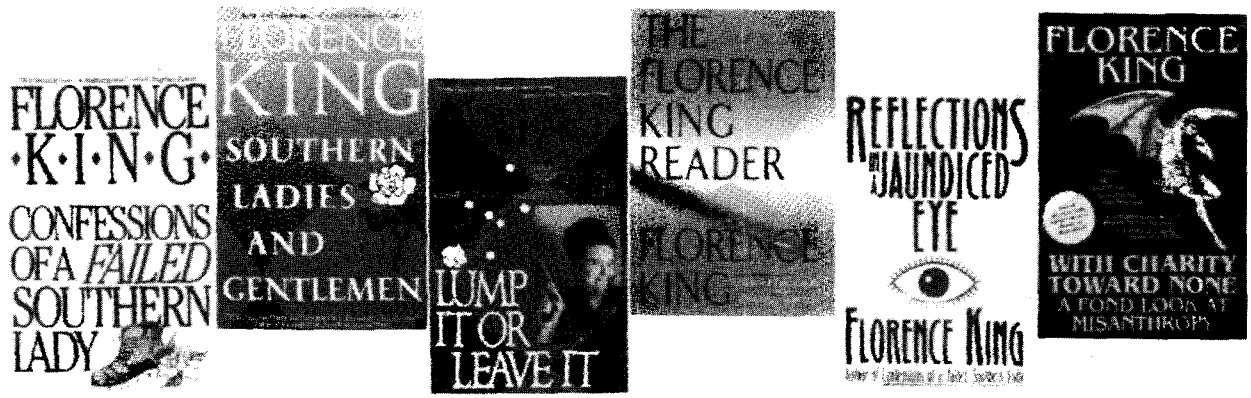

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The spirit of the independent-counsel statute—that no official is above scrutiny—was turned on its head.

7. *Don't get in people's faces.* Traditional conservatism respects the public's wish to be spared displays or discussion of individuals' sex lives. In theory, Clinton breached this code by committing adultery in the Oval Office. But in practice, Starr and the media opened the floodgates. The blow-by-blow accounts in Starr's report—the cigar, the "oral–anal contact," the oral sex while Clinton was on the phone with members of Congress—provoked more anger at Starr than at Clinton. The White House exploited Starr's excess brilliantly, turning "salacious" into a household word. Then came the video of Clinton's testimony, featuring questions such as, "You didn't do any of those things . . . including touching her breast, kissing her breast, touching her genitalia?"

8. *Shut up about Watergate.* Americans are also conservative in their aversion to revolutions. They don't like to impeach presidents. So a crucial part of any impeachment strategy is to lower the threshold of what constitutes an impeachable offense. Since Clinton is plainly guilty of perjury, and perjury is a felony, Starr and the Republicans should simply have argued that a felony is grounds for impeachment. Instead, they embarked on the spectacularly stupid project of comparing Clinton to President Nixon, whose wiretapping and abuse of Federal agencies in the pursuit of power set an absurdly high standard of corruption. The more Clinton's crimes were measured against Watergate, the smaller they looked. Clinton's defenders feasted on the differences.

9. *It's not about you.* Democrats in Congress were furious at Clinton for lying to them about his affair. Washington journalists were appalled that he had brazenly deceived them. Newspapers were full of stories about White House aides whose reputations and faith in public service had been devastated by Clinton's treacherous use of them to mislead the public. The Washington establishment forgot that ordinary people had no reason to care about any of this, because they had no personal relationships with Clinton or the associates he had deceived. Most folks think of Clinton as the guy they hired to run the country, and the country is doing fine. They expect Congress to work with him, or sometimes against him, to make sure the country runs smoothly. What they don't want is a Congress that seems too absorbed in a feud with the President to do its job. That's one reason they lopped another chunk off the Republican majority in November.

10. *If nobody gets it, maybe you're not getting something.* Throughout the year, conservative pundits labored under a metaphysical conviction that once the public knew and understood what Clinton had done, it would turn on him. Each time the public failed to turn on Clinton, the pundits inferred that the public didn't yet know or understand. Even after saturation media coverage of the Starr report ensured that everyone with running water had heard the worst about Clinton—and still the polls didn't move—Republicans rationalized that the report hadn't yet sunk in. Starr had finished telling his joke, but the audience wasn't laughing. That left Congress with the futile and counterproductive task of explaining the punch line. Maybe the joke was really funny. But if the crowd doesn't laugh, it's the comedian who gets the hook. **NR**

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■ **RECRIMINATIONS III** ■

Off Base

Republicans need to tend to their own voters.

KATE O'BEIRNE

PUNDITS had barely recovered from their failed election predictions before they began delivering an equally unanimous evaluation of the Republicans' defeat: too much impeachment, not enough moderation. Of course, the conventional wisdom misses much of the story.

GOP budget-meister John Kasich zeroes in on the real "curse of Lewinsky," as he puts it: not so much voter backlash as the delusion of Republicans that they didn't have to talk about the issues because antipathy to Clinton would drive their voters to the polls. It didn't. Pollster John McLaughlin's election night survey shows that two million fewer conservatives voted this year than in 1994, while the number of moderate voters increased by a like two million. Low turnout is supposed to benefit Republicans. But this year's overall turnout was lower than in 1994, and its makeup shifted left. Two million fewer Republicans and five million more Democrats voted in 1996 than in 1994. "This voting behavior," says McLaughlin, "turned the usual mid-term gains into a bust for the Republicans."

Faithful voters can be counted on to turn out for their guy if he's under assault. And the same circle-the-wagons frame of mind that makes Newt Gingrich his party's best fundraiser boosted Clinton's team at the polls. McLaughlin points out that Republican voters were more likely to vote affirmatively for Congress (70.4 per cent) than against Clinton (19.5 per cent)—but only 51.9 per cent of Democrats voted affirmatively for Democrats in Congress, while 27 per cent of them voted against the

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Republican party. How's that for negativism?

Nor was turnout the only factor. Voters' preferences shifted, too. Polls indicate that many conservatives who *did* make it to the polls this year were more likely to support Democrats than they were four years ago. The Republican share of the religious conservative vote was down 13 points from 1994. Democrats now realize that they can't write off this vote and are recruiting candidates who are socially conservative for districts where being so is an advantage. Pro-life Democrats were elected to open seats in Illinois, Mississippi, and Kentucky. Arkansas Senator-elect Blanche Lambert Lincoln is willing to override Clinton's veto of the partial-birth-abortion ban. So much for the notion—an article of faith among many Republicans—that religious conservatives have nowhere else to go. Following this year's elections, GOP pollster Lance Tarrance reminded his party that religious conservatives are on a mission to save the country, not to save the Republican Party.

Also defecting from the GOP were voters who are enjoying the rewards of this world. Support for Republicans among voters making more than $75,000 fell by 8 points; among those making more than $100,000, there was a 10-point drop. These higher-income voters made up 24 per cent of the electorate and clearly credited Clinton for the strong economy. Just as in 1994, three-quarters of those who thought Clinton is doing a good job voted Democratic. The difference this year was that 55 per cent of voters approved of the President's job performance, while in 1994 only 44 per cent did. Affluent voters can be forgiven for not expecting Republicans to cut their taxes: almost every cut proposed by the GOP is means-tested to exclude them.

Clinton may be unpopular personally, but the fact that Republicans allowed the good economy to become "the Clinton economy" let the President overcome voters' feelings against him on the personal score. So, ironically, Clinton emerged victorious from the elections despite having an unfavorability rating higher than the soon to be ex-Speaker, Gingrich.

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prevailed is particularly instructive. In Georgia, Senator Paul Coverdell won re-election to a seat that has changed hands in every race for the past thirty years; he became the only Republican to be re-elected to this seat in the twentieth century. While on the national level increased black turnout was insignificant (and black support for the GOP was actually up three points), *the black vote was* way up in some states, such as Georgia, Maryland, and Illinois. In Georgia, every black household received a taped phone message from one of the Clintons.

When the First Couple called, black Georgians listened—they represented 29 per cent of the electorate, up 10 points from 1992, when Coverdell was first elected. Still, Coverdell was re-elected with almost 53 per cent of the vote over millionaire cookie king Michael Coles. Coverdell pollster Whit Ayres sums up the winning formula: the Senator ran a classic re-election race based on his record, without compromising his principles.

The Coverdell campaign focused on three issues that mattered to voters: education, taxes, and drugs. The Senator had developed a legislative record on those issues that made him credible on the campaign trail. He sponsored key legislation on IRS reform, tax relief, school reform, and drug interdiction. He also launched "Operation Drug-free Georgia," which he promoted with scores of visits to schools and town-hall meetings. All of this activity made it possible for his campaign ads to feature newspaper headlines declaring, "Coverdell 1, IRS 0," and, "Coverdell: A+ on Education."

Ayres says that Coles's ads promoting the kind of HMO reform opposed by Coverdell helped energize the Democratic base, though it wasn't enough for the challenger. Coverdell's own message broke through the Monica mania, and he won the support of 69 per cent of white men *and* of white women. Nationally, congressional Republicans carried 57 per cent of white men (down five points from 1994) and 53 per cent of white women (down two points).

Just before adjournment, Coverdell voted against Minority Leader Tom Daschle's last attempt to force the Senate to take up the Democrats' HMO-reform bill. Four Republican Senators opposed Trent Lott's motion to table the bill, including Senator Lauch Faircloth. Despite this inoculation, Faircloth lost his re-election bid. What substantive issue did Faircloth have to run on? He had sponsored a bill to create a breast-cancer stamp, not enough to win over swing voters or motivate his core supporters.

In that sense at least, Faircloth was the typical Republican incumbent in 1998—a sorry year for the GOP. **NR**

■ **RECRIMINATIONS IV** ■

Peace Accord

The House GOP closes ranks.

JOHN J. MILLER

AS Rep. Jim Talent (R., Mo.) watched election returns from his brother's tavern in St. Louis on November 3, he began to sense a major GOP shakeup. "The disappointing Indiana and Kentucky results came in, and then we didn't win open seats in the South," he says. "By about ten o'clock, I knew there had to be a leadership change."

Around the country, other members of Congress were reaching the same conclusion. They spent the next two days blitzing each other with cell-phone calls. By Thursday, it was clear Newt Gingrich could not keep his job as Speaker—not because anyone had the votes to replace him in the Republican leadership elections scheduled for November 18, but because he couldn't get a majority of the full House in January. Conservative Rep. Matt Salmon (R., Ariz.) had announced that he and six other Republicans would not vote for him under any circumstances. That would have been enough to throw the Speaker's gavel to the Democrats. On Friday, then, Gingrich quit.

The media hardly bothered to contain their glee over Gingrich's departure, and eagerly anticipated the congressional equivalent of a Celebrity Death Match between moderates and conservatives. In fact, Gingrich's peaceful departure, and his rapid and uncontested replacement by Rep. Bob Livingston (R., La.), calmed the House Republicans. Within days, much of the throw-the-bums-out sentiment had dissipated. Although races did emerge for Majority Leader, Conference Chair, and lesser posts, they were waged largely away from the public eye—and incumbents were winning most of them.

AN exception to that rule was Rep. Tom Davis's (R., Va.) challenge to Rep. John Linder (R., Ga.), the head of the National Republican Congressional Committee. But even that race was no Republican bloodbath. Neither candidate would attack the other. At a meeting of the National Association of Republican Campaign Professionals—at least those willing to be seen in public—on November 10, both gave short speeches and refused to take the bait when the audience asked leading questions. In fact, they heaped praise on each other's fundraising and recruitment abilities. "John Linder is a friend and a very able guy," said Davis, even as he was plotting his very able friend's overthrow.

Livingston can thank his rapid elevation, at least in part, to David Duke. Last February, Livingston was on the verge of announcing his retirement from Congress to seek greener pastures as a lobbyist. When it looked like the former KKK leader might vie for his suburban New Orleans seat, however, Gingrich and others convinced Livingston to seek re-election. He was also intrigued by Gingrich's private intimations about

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leaving office sometime in 1999 to run for president. Livingston sniffed an opportunity, decided to stick around, and suddenly declared his intention to succeed Gingrich. Within weeks, he claimed to have nearly one hundred Republicans ready to support his candidacy whenever Gingrich stepped aside.

This early start made Livingston all but unbeatable when Gingrich left. The winner in leadership races is often the one who contacts the most colleagues first. A surprising number of votes are won by the first plausible candidate who asks—it's hard to carry a grudge against someone who pledges support on a first come, first served basis. Accurate phone lists are a critical tool in the early hours of a race, so that candidates can reach members at home and make personal contact as quickly as possible. (Some aspirants did not know that they could simply dial "0" and have the Capitol switchboard operator connect them to members at home.) Livingston's spring offensive for Speaker had him set up perfectly.

Livingston's early start wasn't his only advantage. Leadership races look like high school popularity contests: ideology takes a back seat to personal relationships. Familiarity—gained by co-sponsoring a bill, working on a committee, or sharing adjoining gym lockers—is the key. Livingston's position as Appropriations Chairman, perhaps the most powerful job in the House short of Speaker, made him a sugar daddy for every member.

They all wanted to stay in his good graces, and many offered commitments early. Several members had either announced or seriously considered running for the top spot, including Talent, Rep. Bill Archer (R., Tex.), and Rep. Chris Cox (R., Calif.). In a matter of days, however, they had all rallied behind the Appropriations Committee Chairman. Cox quit the race after sitting down with Livingston to compare notes about members' commitments.

Suddenly Republicans were a happy family again. The well-liked and adept Majority Whip Tom DeLay (R., Tex.), the third-ranking Republican, was unopposed. And the second- and fourth-ranking Republicans, Majority Leader Dick Armey (R., Tex.) and Conference Chair John Boehner (R., Ohio), looked

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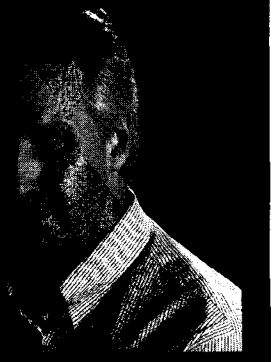

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much stronger (though Boehner's luck wouldn't last).

Armey's two opponents—Rep. Jennifer Dunn (R., Wash.) and Rep. Steve Largent (R., Okla.)—both offered telegenic charisma in contrast to the Majority Leader's less-polished persona. Largent is a handsome social conservative better known to the public as a Hall-of-Fame wide receiver than a pol. His big drawback was that members view him as a troublemaker. And when Largent told the *Washington Times* that Armey's scheduling pace had caused as many as 12 members to divorce in the last four years, it suggested that he wasn't ready for prime time.

THE election of Dunn, an economic conservative who mutes her pro-abortion views, was touted as a way to refashion the GOP's white-guy image. As she explained the rationale of her candidacy to *USA Today*, "I'm a woman." Dunn's letter to colleagues announcing her candidacy shored up her conservative credentials not by talking about issues but by mentioning that she named her son "Reagan." ("We're supposed to support her because of this?" asked an incredulous Hill aide.)

Armey stayed off camera and out of the newspapers as Dunn and Largent raced onto CNN, where their public campaigning would annoy many of their colleagues. Despite constant complaints about the Majority Leader—his controversial role in 1997's botched Speaker coup, his close ties to Gingrich since then—Armey maintains a deep well of support among conservatives both in and out of Congress. Also, he was viewed as an ideological check on Livingston's process-oriented management style. He was the first choice of many members, and the second choice of enough others. By the weekend before the vote, Dunn supporters weren't returning phone calls—apparently depressed over their candidate's poor showing.

Armey's win was bad news for Boehner, even though both men agreed to support each other. Boehner faced the GOP's only black member of Congress, Rep. J. C. Watts (Okla.). Many Republicans did not want to be seen as blocking the ambitions of both a woman and a black. Boehner came under criticism for failing to develop and promote a coherent message for the party, while Watts is viewed as an up-and-comer who gave the best speech at the 1996 GOP convention. "This is a communications job," said one member. "Who could possibly vote against J. C. Watts?" Watts's victory reflected no ideological battle within the caucus, and was unlikely to cause any lingering resentments.

Hard as it may be for outsiders to fathom, Republican spirits have lifted since the election. Even members critical of Livingston's spender-in-chief proclivities as head of the Appropriations Committee believe he can bring order to a place that has not seen much of it lately. Livingston is giving conservatives reason for their hope: He says his first bill as Speaker, HR-1, will take Social Security off budget, a move that immediately wipes out the Federal Government's phony surplus—perhaps making it easier for Republicans to argue for fiscal conservatism, even though it also hurts the chances for tax cuts.

But don't expect the Republican cease-fire to last. Everyone knows that a handful of mavericks can hold the agenda hostage in a Republican caucus with only a six-seat advantage. Republicans are going to have to decide if they want to spend two years fighting each other—or fighting the Democrats. **NR**

■ RECRIMINATIONS V ■

Altered States

Democrats come roaring back in the states.

JOHN HOOD

RALEIGH, N.C.—After Election Day 1994, the big news wasn't just a GOP takeover of Congress. At the grassroots, the story was the coming parity between Democrats and Republicans in state capitals. Two states, separated by thousands of miles and very different political traditions, typified the new competition in the legislatures: North Carolina and Washington.

The GOP made its largest state legislative gains in these two states in 1994, the year of the Republican Revolution. An increase of 38 Republican legislators gave the party control of the North Carolina House and a bare minority (24–26) in the Senate. Washington Republicans picked up both legislative chambers with an historic gain of 25 seats.

In 1998, the year of Republican Dissolution, these gains evaporated, leaving Democratic leaders giddy and their Republican counterparts flummoxed. "We didn't expect it," Democratic consultant Cathy Allen told the *Seattle Times* after her party took back both houses of the Washington legislature in a statewide Democratic wave. "Frankly, we didn't deserve it." Her counterpart in North Carolina, where the Democrats recaptured the House, sounded equally surprised. "No one thought we were going to win the House back—no one," Liz Chadderdon, who directed the N.C. House Democratic Committee, told the Associated Press. "We just out-campaigned 'em. We out-mailed 'em, out-phoned 'em."

Chadderon is right about one thing: successful voter-turnout drives among key Democratic constituencies helped to blunt Republican hopes in state legislative races nationwide. Republicans had based their hopes of 180 seats, and thus a majority of state legislators around the country, on historical trends. On average, a sitting president's party has lost about three hundred legislative seats in every off-year election since 1962. The most dramatic legislative cycle was 1966, when Republicans gained a whopping 762 legislative seats, many in the South as conservatives began their switch from Democratic to Republican allegiance. The next-most-dramatic cycle was 1974, the post-Watergate GOP deba-

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cle in which Democrats claimed 628 seats. Many Republicans this year had pointed to 1974 as a precedent for a Lewinsky-led rout of the Democrats.

It was not to be. In fact, Democrats actually gained about 50 seats this year and uprooted Republican control in five legislative chambers. In addition to the Washington and North Carolina victories, the Democrats reclaimed the Wisconsin Senate they had lost in a special election earlier this year and grabbed the New Hampshire Senate for the first time since *1912*. Democrats also broke a tie in the Indiana House. Their gain in total legislative chambers was four. (The Michigan House, thanks to popular GOP Gov. John Engler, and the Minnesota House—no thanks to Jesse "The Body" Ventura—tipped over to the Republican column.)

What happened? Again, consider North Carolina and Washington. Republicans in both states had made their unprecedented gains in 1994 primarily on the issue of taxes. Republican legislative campaigns that year focused on recent state tax increases and burgeoning state budgets. In North Carolina, a Democratic-controlled legislature had raised taxes by $650 million during a recessionary budget crisis in 1991, then approved a double-digit increase in spending as the economy picked up and revenue growth accelerated. In 1994, North Carolina lawmakers spent a billion-dollar budget surplus without even considering tax rebates or cuts. The state GOP ran radio ads across the state ridiculing big-spending Democrats for raising their own pay while ignoring the pay of overburdened taxpayers. The result was strong voter turnout in traditional Republican bastions—the western mountains, small-town Piedmont—as well as historic inroads in suburban Raleigh and Greensboro.

In Washington, the tax hike had been even more recent. Former Democratic Gov. Mike Lowry and a unified legislature raised general-fund taxes by $600 million in 1993, plus millions more in taxes to fund a Clinton-style health-care package. Washington Republicans capitalized on traditional party strength in Eastside King County and districts outside of the Democrats' urban core in Seattle and Tacoma to turn the state elections into a referendum on two years of Democratic governance.

In 1998, Republicans ran into a host of problems coast to coast, most of their own making. First, weak showings at the top of the ticket hurt Republican incumbents in marginal seats. Sen. Patty Murray's relatively easy win over Republican U.S. Rep. Linda Smith in Washington and John Edwards's come-from-behind victory over Republican Sen. Lauch Faircloth in North Carolina helped Democratic candidates up and down the ballot. In both states, Democratic organizers used tape-recorded phone messages from Hillary Clinton and flurries of mailers to turn out minority voters, government employees, and other elements of the Democratic base.

As with Republican candidates nationwide, GOP incumbents in Washington and North Carolina had problems with both their base and the small but critical contingent of swing voters who showed up at the polls. Fiscal-conservative voters pined for the spending restraint and massive tax cuts they expected but never got. Social conservatives despaired that, whatever they did, President Clinton would get away with his egregious conduct. Even a statewide initiative in Washington to ban partial-birth abortion didn't turn out the religious Right (the ballot measure lost while a medical marijuana-legalization measure won).

Independents broke heavily for Democratic candidates in both states, too. One set of swing voters—women who had supported Clinton in past elections—heard nothing appealing from Republicans. In 1994, they had worried about the tax burden, crime, and welfare spending, but all three seem to be falling this year. They then turned their attention to education, on which Republicans have yet to find a voice. For the other major group of independents—populist Perot supporters, most of them male, enamored of term limits and against corporate welfare—Republicans promised a lot in 1994 and failed to deliver. These disaffected voters didn't even show up this year.

It wasn't as if Republicans didn't have some tailwinds in these states. At the same time Democrats were winning congressional and legislative races, Washington's controversial ballot initiative banning racial preferences passed overwhelmingly. It got the support of 58 per cent of the overall vote, 65 per cent of white men, 51 per cent of white women, a majority of moderates and independents, and even a third of Democrats. In North Carolina, Republicans made impressive gains in statewide elections for the Supreme Court and Court of Appeals.

But, hitching their wagon to the scandal star, Republicans in North Carolina, Washington, and other battleground states had no clear message on the core issue of taxes and the swing issue of education. The notable exceptions are Florida, Texas, and Michigan, where strong Republicans at the top of the ticket helped to articulate a conservative, problem-solving agenda and add legislative seats to the GOP column.

The bottom line: If you can't turn out your base and appeal to even a sliver of independents, you will lose competitive elections in marginal districts and open seats. Forget about grandiose visions of changing political paradigms. It doesn't take a lot of voters to restructure power in state capitals. In North Carolina, a shift of fewer than 2,000 votes from Democrats to Republicans out of 1.6 million cast in competitive N.C. House districts would have kept the GOP in charge. On such slim margins are revolutions—and counter-revolutions—made. **NR**

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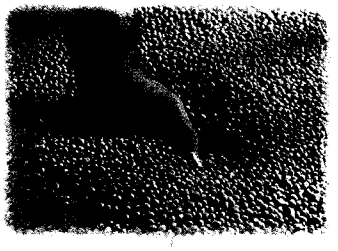

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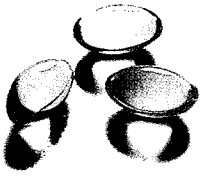

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■ THE SCANDAL ■

Histrionics

Where's the history in the historians' statement?

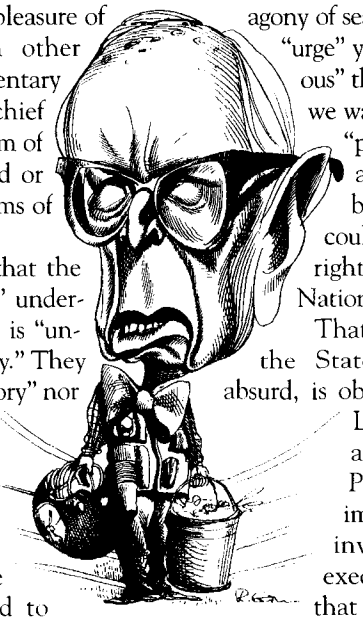
ROBERT P. GEORGE & GERARD V. BRADLEY

WHEN word came that four hundred professional historians had published a "Statement" about the impeachment inquiry, few expected it to back Ken Starr and Henry Hyde. It had been orchestrated, after all, by Kennedy court intellectual and Democrat for all seasons Arthur Schlesinger Jr. Still, we expected that the historians' intervention would at least elevate the quality of the debate. Competent historical analysis is undeniably relevant to the question of what Congress should do about Clinton's lying and obstruction of justice. And among the signatories were historians of high professional standing and impressive scholarly attainments. Introducing the Statement, co-drafter Sean Wilentz of Princeton described it as the contribution of "historians speaking as historians."

It is nothing of the kind. Rather, it is an imposture: It places the stamp of professional scholarship on what is, at best, a purely partisan political tract. The only interesting question it raises is whether those responsible should be merely censured or impeached and removed from their professorial chairs.

The Statement's central claim has to do less with historiography than with the Constitutional text. The historians place their intellectual authority, not to mention the prestige of their impressive institutional affiliations, behind a truly astonishing proposition. The Framers of the Constitution, they say, "*explicitly* reserved [impeachment] for high crimes and misdemeanors *in the exercise of executive power*" (emphasis supplied). This is untrue. The Constitution is silent on whether the offenses warranting impeachment must be committed in the exercise of executive powers. That is what gives rise to the debate about which offenses, beyond treason and bribery, qualify as "high Crimes and Misdemeanors" meriting impeachment. The bald assertion that the text (or perhaps some other writing of "the Framers"—if so, which?) *explicitly* resolves the question is breathtakingly audacious.

These "historians speaking as historians" have placed before the public a brief that is entirely devoid of historical fact. It mentions a sentence fragment from James Madison, but that sound bite, whose context is left undisclosed, supports no relevant lesson from the past. It simply underlines the actual text of the Constitution: impeachment is for "Treason, Bribery, other high Crimes and Misdemeanors." Thus, our system of government differs from one in which the President serves "during pleasure of the Senate." Ours, in other words, is not a parliamentary system; the President, as chief executive, has a fixed term of office and does not stand or fall according to the whims of the legislative majority.



The historians allege that the "theory of impeachment" underlying the "present drive" is "unprecedented in our history." They neither explain that "theory" nor mention any previous impeachment inquiries. There is not a word about Andrew Johnson or Richard Nixon; nor about judges who have been removed or forced to resign under threat of impeachment. Indeed, if you did not already know that a dozen or so officials have been impeached, and most convicted (or forced to resign to avoid that fate), you might conclude that the Clinton case is "unprecedented" because it is the first.

The Statement accuses the supporters of impeachment of many innovations: the open-ended inquiry is "novel"; the processes are "new"; the Presidency "as never before" may be at the mercy of Congress. But it offers no facts in support of these claims.

The historians are ghosts not of Christmases past, but of Christmases yet to come. While invoking their authority as experts on what has gone before, their entire case rests on predictions of the future. The "present drive" to impeach the President "will have the most serious implications"; it is "extremely ominous"; the Presidency will be "permanently disfigured and diminished," . . . "crippled in meeting the inevitable challenges" ahead. And then there is the high melodrama: we "face a choice between preserving or undermining our Constitution." All of these claims are simply asserted without argument. The message is one that Americans by now should be very leery of: "Trust us, we're professors."

In one respect, at least, the historians cannot be accused of trying to hide the partisanship of their statement. They make no effort to mimic the tone of dispassionate scholarship. They "deplore" the inquiry; they fear "a protracted national agony of search and accusation"; they "urge" you to oppose this "dangerous" theory of impeachment. Do we want disaster, they ask, or to "protect the Constitution and get back to the public business?" The language could easily have been lifted right out of the Democratic National Committee press kit.

That the position asserted by the Statement is wrong, even absurd, is obvious enough. Not even Laurence Tribe goes so far as to maintain that Presidents can never be impeached for offenses not involving the exercise of executive powers—let alone that the Framers explicitly said so. Moreover, Clinton's impeachment and removal for perjury, subornation of perjury, witness tampering, obstruction of justice, and abuse of power would hardly leave honorable future Presidents "at the mercy . . . of the caprices of any Congress." The precedent it would establish is that Presidents who commit these crimes against the system of law they are sworn "faithfully to execute" will not be permitted to continue in office. Do we really want to be at the mercy of future Presidents who believe otherwise? **NR**

Mr. George is a professor of politics at Princeton University. Mr. Bradley is a professor of law at the University of Notre Dame.

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Pfizer forum
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Intellectual Property: The Patent on Prosperity

BY C. L. CLEMENTE

A senior pharmaceutical executive and expert on patent law argues that protection of intellectual property is one of the key factors corporations look for when making decisions to invest or to transfer technology.

Every economist and finance minister in the world understands that foreign investment is crucial to a nation's economic growth. What they may not know is what factors are foremost in the minds of corporate executives when they are deciding whether or not to invest in a given country, or even to make a new technology available.

When Pfizer's Corporate Management Committee makes such decisions, we examine many features of a country's business environment. There is one factor, however, that we regard as essential – strong laws to protect intellectual property.

A World Bank survey of international executives conducted in the early 1990s showed that Pfizer is not alone in this view. What, the executives were asked, were the main factors in determining a multi-national corporation's investment decisions? Topping the list, along with tax rates, was intellectual property protection. So critical are safeguards on intellectual property, the study found, that their absence could deter investment in even the world's most populous markets. Eight in ten executives, for example, said they would not permit transfer of their newest or best technology to even their own wholly-owned subsidiaries in India because of weak patent protection.

I can illustrate my point with a real example. Pfizer has decided not to launch Viagra, its drug for erectile dysfunction, in India, which is one of the largest emerging markets that is yet to introduce an effective patent law. This decision was taken despite a reported strong demand for the product in India. Plans for major investment were also shelved indefinitely. Although there are a few other countries that don't yet offer such protection, India remains more egregious among them in infringing rights to intellectual property. As a result, India has sorely lagged behind other major Asian markets in attracting foreign investment; China, for instance, is receiving 55 times the investment going to India. In order to join the world economic community, India initiated in the early 1990s a sweeping economic liberalisation programme. This has not led to concrete measures, such as IP protection, needed to draw foreign investment in India's pharmaceutical industry and revitalise its healthcare sector.

One of the most efficacious ways of building a strong economy is to insist on protecting intellectual property.

The World Bank study bears out a fundamental fact of economics that we at Pfizer see in action every day. Why does Pfizer do business where it does? Simple: We do business where we are welcomed. It costs about $500 million and takes years to bring a new drug to market. But money and time are no guarantee of success. The odds of a new drug getting to market are one in 5,000. The chances of getting a drug to market and making enough money to recoup a company's investment in further R&D are even more daunting.

Pfizer, after all, is less a company of physical assets than it is a company of knowledge. We are what we know. And we want to protect what we know. To discover, manufacture, and market vital new drugs, we have to know that the fruits of our work will be respected as ours. It's that incentive that encourages further risk, research, and development.

A major fallacy that impedes passage of strong patent laws is to think that intellectual property protection is the luxury of already-prosperous economies, a reform that emerging markets can put off until their economies are stronger. I would contend that one of the most efficacious ways of building a strong economy is to insist on protecting intellectual property. Nor, contrary to myth, do strong patent laws hinder small, regional companies in favour of large multi-nationals. Regional companies are the first to gain from the technology transfer, increase in joint ventures, and enhanced technical training that foreign investment brings. After strong intellectual property provisions were established by Korea in 1987, for instance, the market share of local pharmaceutical firms rose. By 1990, more than 75 percent of the applications for intellectual property rights were from local innovators. Today, Korea is exporting pharmaceutical technology.

Or consider the case of Mexico, which adopted full patent protection in 1994 and now attracts more than 12 times the amount of investment India receives. Brazil, too, is benefiting from its own host of recent market reforms. Brazil enacted firm protections for intellectual property, and in short order Pfizer agreed to commit over $100 million to our work in that country, a fraction of industry-wide plans to invest some $2 billion in Brazil.

The message from inside corporate board rooms is the same as that from the world's emerging economies: tough IP laws help create vibrant economies. For this reason, intellectual property protection is one of the policies that is essential to the building of a more stable and affluent global order.

C.L. Clemente is Senior Vice President for Corporate Affairs, and Secretary and Corporate Counsel, of Pfizer Inc. This article is an excerpt from a speech Mr. Clemente delivered at a conference of MERCOSUR (Mercado Común del Sur) earlier this year.

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■ THE SCANDAL II ■

Founding Principles

White House spin aside, America was built on virtue.

RICHARD BROOKHISER

WE know what Congress wants to do about impeachment. Democrats, who have defended President Clinton in every investigation, from Whitewater to campaign finance, will do it again, while the demoralized Republicans wish the whole thing would go away, before they do.

History has been invoked to foster the do-nothing mood. Alexander Hamilton admitted to having had an adulterous affair while he was Treasury Secretary with Maria Reynolds, whose husband, a small-time crook, then blackmailed him; Thomas Jefferson, recent DNA tests suggest, fathered a child by his slave, Sally Hemings. Defenders of the President, in and out of the White House, cite the Founding Fornicators and ask: since scandal did not destroy the Founders' careers then, why should it end Clinton's now? (What Clinton's equivalent of the "Report on Credit" or the Louisiana Purchase might be, is not at issue.) But the First Congress has other messages for the 105th.

In the fall of 1789, Vice President John Adams was talking with two Senators, Oliver Ellsworth and William Maclay, about judicial matters; Maclay recorded their conversation in his diary.

Adams and Ellsworth "said the president . . . was above the power of all judges, justices, etc. 'For what,' said they, 'would you put it in the power of a common justice to exercise any authority over him and stop the whole machine of government?'

"I said that, 'Although President, he was not above the laws.'

"Both of them declared, 'You could only impeach him, and no other process whatever lay against him.'

"I put the case: 'Suppose the President commits murder in the streets.'

"'Impeach him.'

"'But you can only remove him from office on impeachment.'

"'Why, when he is no longer President, you can indict him.'

"'But in the meanwhile he runs away. But I will put another case: suppose he continues his murders daily, and neither houses [of Congress] are sitting to impeach him? . . .'

"Mr. Adams said I was arguing from cases nearly impossible."

No sequel to the musical *1776* will make a song of this, but it is directly relevant today. Maclay thought a law-breaking president could be hauled into court. Adams and Ellsworth thought impeachment was the necessary first step. Adams would be President himself; Ellsworth's opinion is equally weighty, since he had signed the Constitution. But none of them thought a president was above punishment.

Did the Founders think perjury deserved punishing? In September 1796, George Washington's Farewell Address took up the subject of perjury, in the famous paragraph on religion in public life. "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports," Washington wrote. "A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity." But in this climactic act of his political life, he traced one connection. "Let it simply be asked, Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation *desert* the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice?" Washington, in myth, never told a lie. In real life, we may infer from this, he never told a lie in court.

Would the first President have been so worked up about lies in civil suits? He draws no distinction between civil and criminal cases. It is also worth noting that Alexander Hamilton, who drafted the Farewell Address for Washington, was himself a lawyer, with both a criminal and a civil practice. In one case, *Le Guen* v. *Gouverneur and Kemble*, Hamilton won the largest judgment awarded in America up to that time. Neither he nor his client would have appreciated any witness's lying under oath.

What about lawsuits involving sex? Hamilton's adultery never brought him into court. But he had already revealed it to enemies in Congress by the time he wrote the Farewell Address, and when a garbled account appeared in the newspapers, months later, he revealed the whole truth to the public, including twenty-some love and blackmail letters. There is no reason to think he would have condoned perjury about a matter that he himself exposed, without legal compunction.

CAN desire damage the state? In *Federalist* 6, written in 1788, Hamilton included a long discussion of international and civic problems, caused by the "private passions . . . of leading individuals," from ancient Greece to early America. He touched on debt (Daniel Shays), ambition (Cardinal Wolsey), the "bigotry," "cabals," and "petulancies" of two French royal mistresses and the Duchess of Marlborough. Even "the celebrated Pericles, in compliance with the resentment of a prostitute" misused his power. When Hamilton became Treasury Secretary, he would fall in with a "prostitute": Mr. Reynolds pimped his wife to generate blackmail. But Hamilton was willing to tell the tale to his enemies and to the public at large, to show that he was still a forthright public servant.

Why is this important? The Founders were so proud of the checks and balances they built into the system that we (and they) can sometimes think of them as its only supports. But, as the Farewell Address notes, politics also requires a modicum of virtue. When the nation's chief law officer lies under oath to protect himself from embarrassment, the modicum has not been met.

John Adams warned William Maclay about arguing "from cases nearly impossible." Bill Clinton would have struck the Founders as inconceivable. Congress should not let another branch of government drift away from their expectations. **NR**

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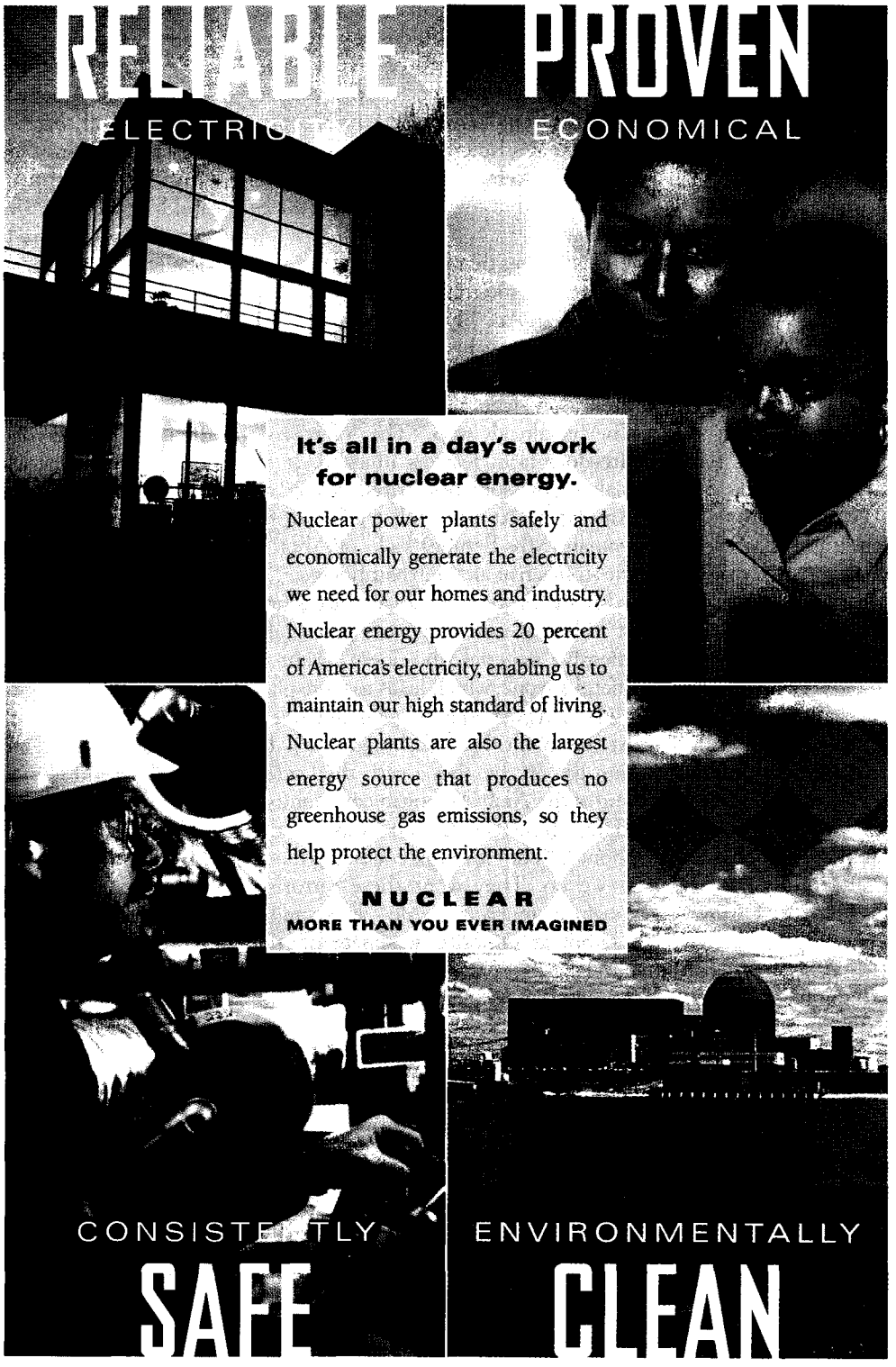

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■ CULTURE WATCH ■

Siege Mentality

A ridiculous controversy over a silly film.

DAVID KLINGHOFFER

ONE night last week, I went to see *La Bohème* by Giacomo Puccini at the Metropolitan Opera—and the next night *The Siege* by Edward Zwick. The juxtaposition cast a certain light on the controversy surrounding Mr. Zwick's thriller about Arab terrorists trying to blow up New York.

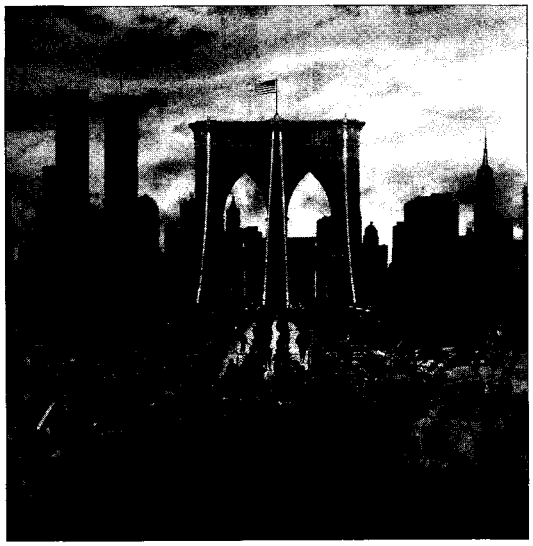
A few years ago, the Met installed title screens in the back of each seat so that operagoers can follow the libretto. This was a mistake, as the silliness of most opera plots now distracts you from the music, causing you to crack up and annoy your neighbors. *La Bohème* is about a Paris *artiste*-type who falls in love with a beautiful, tubercular girl who coughs herself to death in the last act. It boasts one of the most cliché-choked stories in all of opera history: from platitudes seemingly plucked out of every "Dear Abby" column you ever read ("Unhappy people should not live together," a fellow *artiste* advises the lovesick protagonist) to the inevitable death scene at the end. (Every Puccini opera I've seen concludes with a beautiful woman kicking off.)

Mr. Zwick's film and its reception would have appealed to Puccini. The plot concerns an FBI anti-terrorist squad, led by Denzel Washington and assisted by Annette Bening, trying to head off a campaign by Arab terrorist cells to make chaos in Manhattan. When the FBI fails to halt the bombings of buses and Broadway theaters, the government sends in the Army, led by Bruce Willis.

The military rounds up and tortures Brooklyn's Arab population, which results in so many platitudes being uttered about the importance of civil liberties that even a nineteenth-century opera librettist would have a hard time keeping up. Mr. Washington leads the charge with lines seemingly plucked from every ACLU fundraising letter you ever got in the mail.

He declares that Mr. Willis is in "clear violation of international law" as well as "the Logan Act." There's much lecturing about how naughty it is to torture suspected terrorists, since "if you torture him . . . then they [the terrorists] have won. They've already won." The "right" to a "freedom from fear" is invoked. It all makes you somehow tired to be an American. At the end, the beautiful woman (Miss Bening) kicks off, shot in the stomach at an Arab bathhouse.

Mr. Zwick goes through all the gestures of a filmmaker working with potentially offensive material who doesn't want to offend anyone, which leads to more platitudes and clichés, both aural and visual. At one point, Mr. Washington says he "just got off the phone with the leadership of the Arab-American community." (The whole "leadership" was on the phone?) "They love this country as much as we do. They want these terrorists caught as much as we do." In a similar attempt at minority appeasement, the film laboriously includes not just a patriotic Lebanese-American FBI agent but a crew of FBI colleagues who might have been selected by the UC-Berkeley admissions office before Proposition 209: two blacks, one Asian, one Hispanic, two white women, and a lone white guy.



But as Mr. Zwick has now learned, you can't win. Before the film was even released, groups with names like the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee called it "insidious, incendiary, and dangerous," held a press conference in front of Twentieth Century Fox, and distributed leaflets outside theaters. Mr. Zwick was accused of encouraging "stereotypes," which is another word for a cliché that a particular group finds offensive—not necessarily because it's inaccurate.

In a *New York Times* op-ed piece, Ibrahim Hooper of CAIR complained that "most of the Muslims portrayed in *The Siege* . . . have total disregard for human life." True, but the movie is about terrorists; and any given day when you open the newspaper and read about a terror attack, more often than not it's a Muslim who detonated the explosive. By Mr. Hooper's logic, the only minority you can't depict as terrorists is Arabs. The portrayal of an ethnic group is judged offensive, then, to the extent it's truthful.

■

Denzel Washington's lines are plucked from ACLU fundraising letters.

■

Zwick responded that he was really trying to undermine stereotypes by showing us "what happens when stereotypes are played out to disastrous effect." He hopes his efforts will "engender dialogue." In short, if I've parsed him correctly, he was using platitudes to fight stereotypes on behalf of a cliché.

Unfortunately, movie theaters don't have a device in the back of each seat to let you fiddle with the soundtrack so as to hear the exploding TNT, but not the lame dialogue. As Denzel Washington exclaims on seeing bomb-scared New Yorkers jump at the sound of a backfiring bus: "They're attacking our way of life!" So they are. When you can't go to a suspense thriller free from the fear of being lectured to for two hours, well, then, they have won. They've already won. **NR**

Mr. Klinghoffer is the author of *The Lord Will Gather Me In: My Journey to Jewish Orthodoxy*, to be published in December by Free Press.

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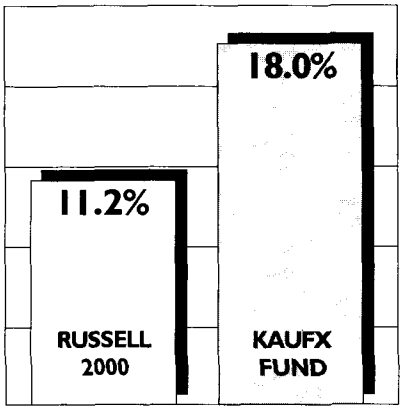

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■ COVER STORY ■

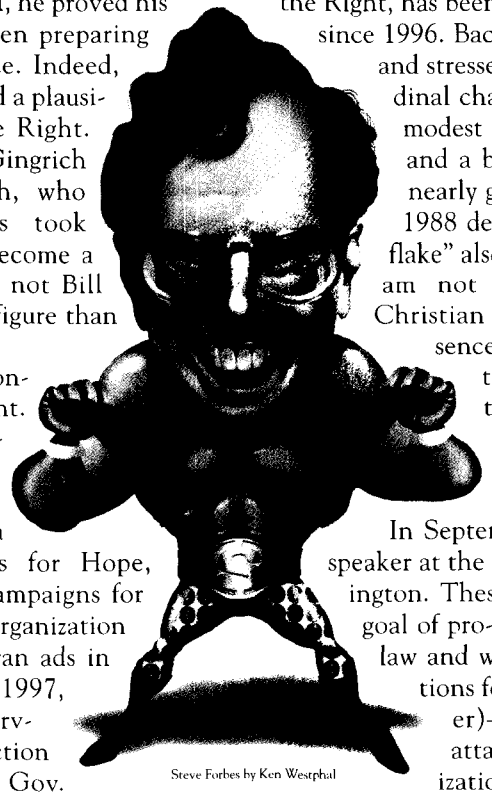
Forbes ASAP

The last election underscores the need for a presidential candidate with ideas. But are ideas enough?

RAMESH PONNURU

AS a breed, the once and future presidential candidate does not, in general, place his own phone calls. Steve Forbes still does. I took a message from him last year for a colleague: "Can you please tell her that Steve Forbes returned her call? F-O-R-B-E-S." Forbes's charm when he entered national politics in 1995 was that he was unassuming and unfailingly polite, that he was endearingly awkward—that, in short, he was not a politician. He went over well with crowds, but nobody gave him a chance to wrest the Republican presidential nomination from Bob Dole.

Forbes didn't beat Dole, but he did impress the skeptics by winning the Arizona and Delaware primaries. And by campaigning for Republicans in the fall, he proved his candidacy had been no lark. He's been preparing non-stop for the 2000 race ever since. Indeed, after only three years, Forbes has staked a plausible claim to being the leader of the Right. Nobody has a better claim: not Newt Gingrich or Trent Lott; not Rush Limbaugh, who loomed larger before Republicans took Congress; not Jack Kemp, who has become a Harold Stassen who *doesn't* run; and not Bill Bennett, now seen more as a cultural figure than a political one.



Steve Forbes by Ken Westphal

Forbes has sought the support of conservatives by building their movement. Presidential aspirants routinely campaign for their party's candidates, as Forbes did for 97 of them in this election cycle. But Forbes also set up a "message tank," called "Americans for Hope, Growth, and Opportunity," which campaigns for issues. In 1997, AHGO, a self-funded organization with 140,000 dues-paying members, ran ads in Iowa to help get tax cuts passed. In 1997, Forbes drew criticism from some conservatives for campaigning for the re-election of his childhood friend, New Jersey Gov. Christine Todd Whitman. But unlike other Republican notables who helped Mrs. Whitman, such as Dan Quayle, Forbes returned to New Jersey to urge the state legislature to ban partial-birth abortion over her veto. (It did.)

In addition, AHGO pumps out memos and press releases like confetti. All the while, Forbes is building a record to compensate for his not holding political office—and without the disadvantages of office-holding. Forbes can pick his issues carefully and eschew compromise. No wonder Gingrich and Lott don't like him; Texas Gov. George W. Bush, too, is said to resent having to compete with him. Of course, the Republican establishment's opposition to Forbes only helps him among conservatives. At the same time, Forbes protects the integrity of conservatism by guarding its independence from that establishment.

MENDING FENCES

The most important way Forbes has helped himself, and the Right, has been by reaching out to social conservatives since 1996. Back then, Forbes refused the pro-life label and stressed the importance of cultural and attitudinal change in ending abortion. He focused on modest first steps, such as parental notification and a ban on abortion for sex selection—not nearly good enough for most pro-lifers. Forbes's 1988 description of Pat Robertson as a "toothy flake" also angered many social conservatives. ("I am not toothy!" Robertson bellowed at a Christian Coalition board meeting.) In the absence of better information, social conservatives' suspicions of rich Easterners carried the day. Facing some nasty attacks, Forbes made matters worse by saying the Christian Coalition didn't speak for all Christians.

In September 1997, though, Forbes was the hit speaker at the Coalition's annual conference in Washington. These days he makes clear he supports the goal of pro-lifers—that every child be protected in law and welcomed in life (with the usual exceptions for rape, incest, and the life of the mother)—and for good measure throws in attacks on assisted suicide and drug legalization. Few Republicans assail partial-birth abortion more frequently than Forbes does now. But is his shift sincere?

The Forbes camp denies that the candidate has shifted at all: social-conservative leaders, it maintains, have adopted his incrementalist approach to ending abortion by pushing the partial-birth-abortion ban rather than a Human Life

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Amendment. It's true that Forbes hasn't contradicted anything he said earlier, but he has fleshed out his position in a way more appealing to social conservatives. In 1996, Forbes gave no impression that he would fight for his humble first steps on abortion, let alone for an eventual prohibition. And veterans of that campaign say that Forbes's criticism of the Christian Coalition, portrayed today as an off-the-cuff remark taken out of context, was in fact the result of a conscious decision by then advisor Carter Wrenn.

But it would be a mistake to focus on the details. Ralph Reed, at the time executive director of the Coalition, says, "More important was the fact that the campaign hadn't systematically built relationships and contacts, so when [the controversy started] he had nothing to rely on." That won't happen again: Forbes now has friendly relations with Robertson, and the former head of the Georgia Christian Coalition, Jerry Keen, has signed up with AHGO. Jesse Helms spoke warmly of Forbes at a National Right to Life Committee dinner in April. On the other hand, the Forbes camp's revisionism about 1996 undercuts his claim to sincerity. He would do better to say that it took time for him to find a rhetoric with which he was comfortable—which is probably the truth of the matter. He also needs to worry about appearing to pander, as he was accused of doing when he half-heartedly endorsed a cut-off of party funds from Republicans who support partial-birth abortion.

The Forbes camp argues that social conservatives have adopted his incrementalist approach to ending abortion.

Forbes may not be the first choice of religious conservatives in 2000, but they won't veto him either. The overtures to them also strengthen the Right by building bridges between its economic and moral factions. Neither is the cultural significance of someone of Steve Forbes's background inveighing against infanticide to be taken lightly. Prominent business leaders don't often address "The Moral Basis of a Free Society" (the title of a Forbes speech published in *Policy Review*).

Forbes has broadened his message in other ways, too. As in 1996, he attacks Washington and proposes the flat tax as a weapon against the imperial city. But since that idea has become familiar, he can talk more about other ways of transferring power to individuals: school choice, Social Security privatization, medical savings accounts. Missile defense, opposition to racial preferences, and freedom for the Internet have also entered Forbes's mix of issues. His positions mirror those of right-wing think tanks (at whose fund-raisers he is often the keynote speaker). Like other supply-siders, Forbes shows little enthusiasm for cutting government spending, except indirectly—competition and choice are to cut costs in Medicare and Social Security.

Forbes has modified his approach to taxes, as well. He still declares, without a trace of irony, that the tax code is the greatest obstacle to the pursuit of happiness. But he is starting to treat the flat tax the same way he treats the Human Life Amendment: it's the ultimate goal, but for now smaller reforms—rolling back the 1990 and 1993 tax increases, for instance—will move us in the right direction. Forbes has also suggested that taxpayers should be allowed to choose between paying the flat tax and filing under the old system, thus eliminating one of the flat tax's political disadvantages (the possibility that it would harm some taxpayers) and one of its substantive ones (the difficulty of transition to the new system).

Only "masochists," Forbes suggests, would choose the current tax code. Still, eliminating the deduction for interest on mortgages may be a political task for a masochist. Forbes has changed the national debate in the Nineties more than anyone but Ross Perot. But as with Perot's obsessions with the deficit and campaign-finance reform, it's not clear that tax reform will serve conservatives well.

And whatever the appeal of the Forbes message, his credibility as a messenger is open to question. The heir to a vast fortune may not be the most persuasive proponent of lower taxes on investment. And temperamentally conservative voters may blanch at the idea of the presidency as an entry-level position. Forbes responds to this concern by citing his Reagan-era service on the board of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty: "I've seen the way bureaucracies work in a nitty-gritty way that certainly you don't see in the Senate or in the House—the fights you have grappling with OMB, interagency battles you have with USIA, State Department, NSC, VOA. And bluntly put, in those bureaucratic battles, we won all of them." But this sounds both weak and off-message (Steve Forbes, bureaucratic empire-builder?).

Another problem: after two straight presidential defeats, Republican primary voters might be risk-averse. "Sure, that's an obstacle we have to overcome," says Don Devine, AHGO national field director. (He adds that Forbes will show he's electable by beating Gov. Bush, which is a bit circular.) Forbes himself likes to note that people said Ronald Reagan wasn't electable either, although that doesn't mean everyone so labeled can win. Forbes aides are currently drawing inspiration from Jesse Ventura's startling victory in the Minnesota gubernatorial race.

A NEW DYNAMIC

Forbes did astonishingly well in 1996, despite a late start and his lack of support from social conservatives. He had to rely heavily on slash-and-burn ads, pulling out one item from a thousand-page budget and holding Bob Dole personally responsible for it (another luxury of not holding office). This time, he'll be as formidable on the ground as he was on the air. In New Hampshire, Forbes will have the support of Paul Young and Peter Robio, key 1996 operatives for Dole and Buchanan respectively. In Iowa, Forbes has procured the services of Bob Haus, who helped Phil Gramm give Dole a black eye in an early straw poll, and will likely get powerhouse consultant John Maxwell, too.

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The background of the race might also be different next time: Forbes advisors seem excited by the possibilities of recession. Nobody else in the field speaks as authoritatively about, or even has a coherent view of, the world economy. The reasons for current turbulence, according to Forbes? Devaluation abroad, overly tight money here, and too-high taxes everywhere. If policy continues to drift, he warns, our time will be remembered as an era of missed opportunities.

After this year's elections, missed opportunities are on a lot of Republican minds. The elections knocked Gingrich, whose challenge Forbes had taken seriously, out of the race. And they led some Republicans to conclude that they should have run on conservative issues. Forbes has a shelf full of them. Forbes frames the 2000 race as "a battle between the establishment and the Reaganesque approach"—the establishment being Gov. Bush. Or as one aide puts it, "It's Mr. Message *vs.* Mr. Popularity."

But if Forbes wants to take on Bush, he'll first have to unify the Right. He has a better shot than anyone else. Conservatives can't do better than Forbes programatically. Some conservatives will resent his open-borders position on immigration, but their only champion, Pat Buchanan, is a no-hoper. Unlike other conservative candidates, Forbes can definitely afford to stay in the race. He can also purchase the support of that considerable portion of the Right that's for sale.

And so far, he has been doing just about everything right. More than any other Republican, he has kept focused on Al Gore, zinging the Vice President on everything from global warming to Russian tax policy. And his campaign is the one best positioned to take advantage of a trend in political demographics—rising public participation in equity markets—to the Right's lasting advantage (see "Stocks Populi," March 9). With the right mix of policies and the adroit use of brokerage lists, Forbes could raise this group's "class consciousness" the way direct-mail specialists did for religious conservatives starting in the late Seventies.

Forbes says he will decide whether to run early next year, but of course he is all but in. He'll never be a great politician, and perhaps that's just as well: the more he tries, the more he'll lose the appeal of the ingenue. But I saw him pat a back at a Republican luncheon in Tucson. And, unassuming though he remains, he's learning to brag: "[I'm] the only genuine CEO [running]. Run a real company, successful business. Know how to do real things in the world. Genuine executive experience where you can't count on glitz and you can't count on spin. . . . Who brought the tax issue up? Who made it real?"

He leans forward, excited now. "Who brought Social Security up in Arizona, Sun City, the need for reform, who's likely to see that through? Health care: who put in a version of medical savings accounts in his own company seven years ago? The workforce can see what genuine reform can do. Who's been out there fiercely advocating parental choice? . . . Also, too, who has a better understanding of the international situation—the Pacific Rim, Japan, Russia, Latin America?" Forbes grins. "We're on record with that." **NR**

Lost Opportunity Society

In 1994, Republicans felt they ruled the world. What went wrong?

RICHARD LOWRY

LATE on the opening day of the 104th Congress, a packed ballroom of Republican revelers at a Washington hotel strained to see Newt Gingrich onstage through the glare of floodlights and over the heads of fellow partygoers. It was as close to the feeling of a mosh pit as you will experience at a Beltway event, charged with the elation of partisan victory and sheer adulation for this man, Speaker Newt—the Moses, the Solon, the Tony Robbins of House Republicans.

The crowd probably would have charged off a cliff like the Gadarene swine for Gingrich. But soon enough he had them bored. He was holding up into the lights a tiny lapel pin. He was talking—at great length—of the "Earning through Learning" program, a scheme to pay poor children for reading books. In front of an audience so fawningly sympathetic, Gingrich had managed to hit a long, idiosyncratic false note.

It was pure Newt Gingrich. In that moment, it was possible to catch the essence of all the Gingrich missteps to come, from the book deal to his complaint about having to exit through the back of Air Force One. There in the ballroom, as during the Gingrich gaffes to follow, it seemed ungrateful to complain: after all, everyone was present for one reason—Newt. But it didn't lessen the nagging sense of lost opportunity that now, four years later, seems an indelible part of his legacy.

Any evaluation of Gingrich must take account of the qualities Midge Decter writes about below ["Comeback Kid?"]: the intelligence, the optimism, the energy that animated his drive to power and his Speakership. It should also go without saying that historic accomplishments—a GOP House majority, welfare reform, a balanced budget—would have been impossible without him. But since 1994 much has gone wrong for Gingrich and the Republicans, and it is from the mistakes of the Gingrich Majority that Republicans have the most to learn.

After the 1994 election, Republicans rode into Congress on a wave of thoughtless anti-institutionalism. They tried to remake Congress according to populist slogans, rendering it harder for them to run the place. Rather than comfortably reap the staff resources of majority status, they imposed strictures on themselves that would lead to a majority run—in the words of one Hill veteran—by "25-year-old press secretaries." This would put the GOP at a disadvantage when waging high-stakes budget battles with the executive branch. Republicans also promised to hold all debates under "open rules," allowing unrestricted debate on the floor (a promise sensibly and quickly abandoned), and

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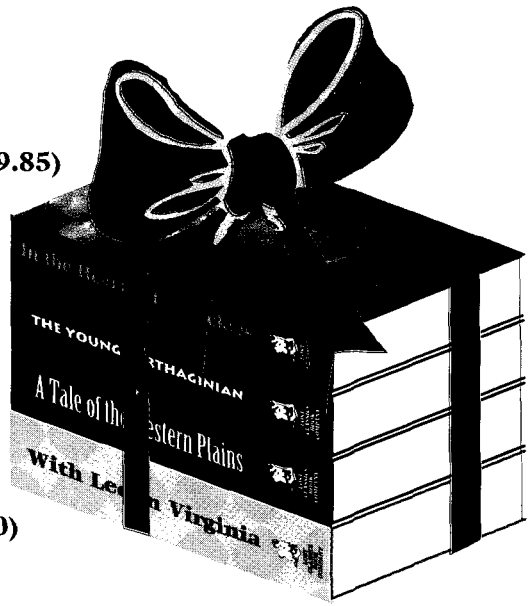

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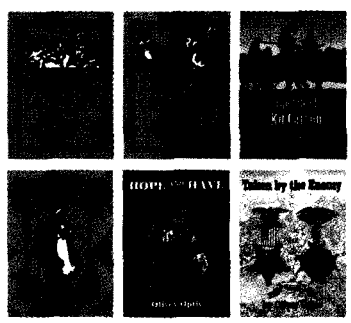

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■ APPRAISAL ■

Comeback Kid?

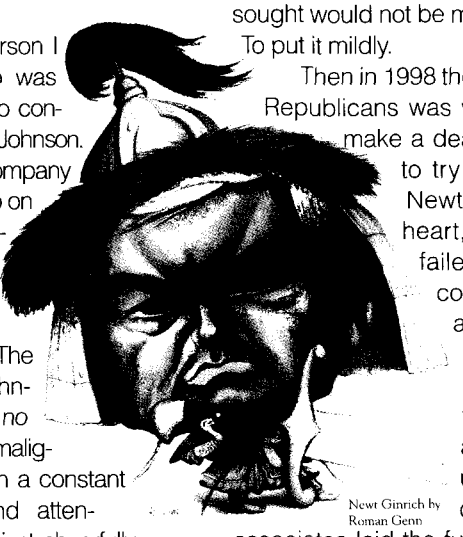
THE November 16th *Time* magazine cover photo of Newt Gingrich—clearly produced in the first moments after he announced his resignation—is a portrait of someone both very somber and very sad. Now, Newt is by nature and habit neither of those things, neither sad nor somber, and looking at that picture I thought, "So, after all that pummeling, four years of it, night and day without letup and from all sides—from your so-called friends as well as your enemies—you have finally been brought to your knees. Welcome to the human race."

I have known other people who have taken a lot of punishment for the innocent brashness of their ambitions, but I have never seen anyone take what had been so relentlessly dished out to Newt not long before I first made his acquaintance: an enormously expensive campaign of nasty TV commercials, unprecedented in an off-election year, accompanied by the only too predictable game of Gotcha from the press; a series of Mickey Mouse ethics charges intended by the Democrats in the House to bedevil and distract him, and finally levying from him the sum of $300,000 as a repayment for the expense incurred by Congress in pursuing him. Nor had he through all this been lacking in Job's comforters in the conservative community to instruct him in the many different ways he had brought it all upon himself, forgetting that it was his strength for which he was being punished and not his weakness (weakness being something that members of Congress were by tradition only too willing to forgive in one another).

In any case, when I met him, I assumed he would be reeling at least a little from all these assaults—topped off by an attempt on his Speakership secretly organized by some of the very young Turks for whose presence in Congress he had been so largely responsible. A normal man, I thought, even one long conditioned to the ways of Washington, would at the very least be showing signs of some emotional fatigue. But fatigued, or even just a little off his stride, was the last thing you would have said Newt was. On the contrary, he was cheerfully off on one of his favorite jaunts, i.e., sitting at the kitchen table, word processor at the ready, writing a book. Only hunting dinosaur fossils, it seems, answers more immediately to his thirst for adventure.

Newt writes the way he does most things: speedily, and at full gallop from morning to night. Indeed, Newt at the word processor is a sight to chill the blood of many an author (very much including this one), for he writes as he speaks from the platform, without hesitation and without preening, and hence as fast as his fingers will take him. No doubt he digs for fossils in exactly the same way—and finds them, too, I would bet.

The only other person I have ever met who was quite so exhausting to contemplate was Lyndon Johnson. To be in Johnson's company was like trying to keep on one's feet in a gale-force wind, and so in some sense is the experience of spending time with Newt. The difference is that Johnson's energy was in no small part laced with malignity—as if he were in a constant rage for power and attention—while Newt's is just cheerfully there, bouncing off the walls and demanding little of those present except not to get in the way.



Newt Gingrich by Roman Genn

He was also embarked on a project inconceivable not only for Lyndon Johnson but for any other politician in the land: he was writing a book to explain, perhaps to himself as much as to the reader, the various ways in which he had screwed up as Speaker and the lessons he had learned from doing it. (My own role in helping him in this extraordinary exercise was merely, as an outsider to the ways of Washington, to require that he explain all the details of his story so that any ordinary reader could understand exactly what was going on—a demand he cheerfully answered to).

Moreover, for Newt—again, as for no one else I have ever known—the entire project of confessing error seemed to be a perfectly cheerful undertaking. Indeed, "cheerful" is a rather pale term with which to describe his temper, not because he is any kind of avatar for perfect happiness but because he is a man forever given to looking at, or for, something up ahead. Newt's wife Marianne has said of him that he is like a little boy who gets out of bed every morning expecting to find a plateful of cookies.

In the case of his book, of course, the plateful of cookies he was looking for was a public understanding of what he had been about and what he had been through. But, at least in the oh-so-narrow precincts of Washington, what he sought would not be much in evidence. To put it mildly.

Then in 1998 the question for the Republicans was whether to try to make a deal with Clinton or to try to destroy him. Newt, ever high of heart, tried both and failed at both: the conservatives were against the deal, and the ordinary voters seemed to want no part of any presidential upheaval. So his colleagues and associates laid the full blame for what they felt to be a historic failure upon the back of an all too willing Newt, and fancied that they were sending him out to the wilderness where scapegoats are left to wander.

If I were they, however, I wouldn't be too sure. The efforts to do him down finally paid off, but for how long? Never count yourself rid of an energetic and truly cheerful man. —MIDGE DECTER

Miss Decter is an author and social critic whose work has appeared previously in these pages.

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eliminated the convenient "proxy voting" that had made it possible for members to vote in committee even if not present.

Meanwhile, Gingrich centralized power in the Speaker's office, sucking authority from the traditional power centers of the committee chairmen. It seemed the best way to avoid the frustrations of working with the Old Bulls, but also made decision-making too dependent on one man. Still, it was a "revolution." All revolutions have their irrational enthusiasms—and in this one it was passing the "Contract with America" in one hundred days. A spasm of legislative activity was necessary to fulfill this campaign promise, and Republicans ran themselves into the ground. By the end of the one hundred days, many GOP staffers had literally fallen ill.

And for what? Much of the one hundred-day agenda fell victim to the Senate. But much of it also fell on deaf ears because people don't care about process—about new ethics rules, or staff reductions, or the line-item veto, or even whether an agenda is passed in one hundred days instead of three hundred. (This is a lesson that Democrats are still learning with campaign-finance reform.) After the frenetic one hundred days—the toughest battle for the party was still ahead.

In the Contract, there was a small deception that in the hothouse of hubris after the 1994 election would grow to overshadow all else: the Balanced Budget Amendment was said to cost nothing, zero, zilch. Technically, of course, that's right: it doesn't cost anything to pass the amendment. But it does cost something to balance the budget. When Gingrich gathered a small circle of top Republicans together and convinced them to try to eliminate the deficit even after the amendment had failed, that "zero" in the Contract suddenly became a figure in the hundreds of billions of dollars.

DISHONESTY

Where to go for the money? Instead of talking about tax cuts and "growing our way out of the deficit," Republicans targeted the entitlements, specifically Medicare. During the 1994 campaign, in response to Democratic attacks, Republicans disavowed any intention to touch Medicare. Then, just a few months later, there they were, proposing a major overhaul of the system. During and after the Medicare battle, there would be Republican complaints about the dishonesty of the White House attacks on the GOP Medicare plan. But the real problem was that the White House dishonesty was more believable than the Republican dishonesty.

Republicans had promised to leave Medicare untouched, then did the opposite. They professed only an intention to "save" the program, a touching concern they had never manifested before. And they said the Medicare plan had nothing to do with balancing the budget when, in reality, that was its sole rationale. Surveying this scene at the time, GOP pollster Frank Luntz told one group of conservative activists that, if they did everything exactly right in the Medicare debate, Republicans had a 50-50 chance of *surviving*.

A party that undertakes such a gamble is responding to something other than reality. In the Medicare fight, Republicans mislearned a lesson from the White House, and from their own success with the Contract: that spin and marketing are everything. They aren't. Word choice is important, but it doesn't change reality. Republicans tried mightily to get reporters to say "slowing the rate of growth" instead of "cutting" Medicare, but the fact was that they were still shrinking a

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popular middle-class program for reasons they weren't willing to own up to.

But if the way Republicans tried to sell their Medicare plan was too cynical, their plan itself was too responsible. Republicans had fallen under the ahistorical delusion that they could govern from Capitol Hill. But the American system has never worked that way. Presidents, not Congresses, strive to pass one hundred-day plans. Gingrich didn't understand that he was elected Speaker rather than Prime Minister (in the early days, he even gave a State of the Union-like prime-time address). The model for his leadership should instead have been Democratic Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, who worried more about ushering George Bush out of office than about passing legislation.

The Republican drive on Medicare dovetailed into the fateful government shutdowns. A strategic disaster on a par with the Maginot Line, the shutdowns helped create the image of the Republican Party and of Gingrich—harsh and reckless—that clings to them today. Even as Republicans were miscalculating

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Gingrich didn't understand that he was elected Speaker rather than Prime Minister.

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how to bring Clinton to his knees, the President was making a strategic retreat. Rush Limbaugh at the time was playing a hilarious tape showing Clinton reciting an ever-changing number of years—10, 9, 8, 6—for when the budget could be balanced. Republicans assumed these were the risible meanderings of an irrelevant President, when they were really the sound of Clinton finally getting it right.

What Clinton was slowly concluding is something that Milton Friedman has long maintained: that the size of the budget deficit has nothing whatsoever to do with the size or the nature of the Federal Government. When the shutdowns came, Clinton was ready to accede to what Republicans thought the principle at issue: a seven-year balanced budget. Clinton realized the balanced budget wasn't a matter of principle but of packaging, and—given a steady revenue stream—he could comfortably fit all of his cherished spending inside.

This was a Dick Morris insight, as was the Administration's pivot on cultural issues. In some ways, the White House understood the cultural nature of the Republican victory in 1994 better than Republicans. The line Newt Gingrich repeated most often in the 1994 campaign was, "American civilization cannot survive with 12-year-olds having babies, 15-year-olds shooting one another, 17-year-olds dying of AIDS, and 18-year-olds graduating with diplomas they cannot read." It was a *cultural* indictment, and an implicit rebuke of the nation's ruling elite for not sharing the common-sense values of the rest of the country.

Indeed, in the summer of 1994, Gingrich had won a crucial victory on the GOP's most reliable social issue: crime. He condemned the Administration's crime bill as soft and full of pork, and when he defeated the "rule" on the bill on the House floor, he had fired the first shot of the "revolution."

But by early 1996, the White House was saying, Never again. It would run the 1996 campaign from an unassailably centrist position on values issues. Clinton won the endorsement of the Fraternal Order of Police. He endorsed the V-chip and school uniforms, and even bragged of signing the Defense of Marriage Act. Republicans either dismissed these positions as too minor to trouble with or hailed them as their own victories, as still more evidence that history was moving inexorably right, into the Speaker's hip pocket. But, like Clinton's new position on the balanced budget, this repositioning was just a redeployment to more secure ground.

While Clinton dug in, the shutdowns had a devastating psychological effect on Republicans. They couldn't understand how they had failed to march smoothly to victory, let alone how the whole strategy had turned into a rout. Thereafter they would conduct themselves like a blind man in a room where all the furniture has unexpectedly been moved—timid, confused, afraid to take a step lest there be another object to stumble over. This defensiveness would keep Republicans from doing anything bold or creative to counteract the emerging Clinton comeback strategy.

JUST THE GOOD STUFF

No longer colored by its cultural counterpart—or the red ink of the deficit—Clinton's traditional fiscal liberalism suddenly took on a more attractive glow. The White House could concentrate on just the good stuff, the popular spending programs, the "education, environment, Medicare, and Medicaid" mantra. This spending in itself was sold in terms of values, of "caring," of "the children"—and with the fight over the deficit resolved, Republican opposition seemed less "prudent" and more "mean-spirited."

Meanwhile, increasingly fortified from the usual GOP attacks, the Democrats could turn a traditional GOP wedge issue to their own advantage: crime. Democrats endorsed the death penalty and made an issue of hiring more cops. Then they turned an issue that in the past had seemed a piece of goo-goo naïveté—gun control—into a crime-control issue. Republicans played along by quixotically voting to repeal the assault-weapons ban in the House. Democrats could argue—as they did at their 1996 Chicago convention, with plenty of crime victims as props—that they were just as tough on crime as Republicans, except *they* didn't want Uzis in the hands of gang members.

Democrats also instinctively turned to a different kind of cultural liberalism. The liberalism of "acid, amnesty, and abortion"—the liberalism of license—was out; the liberalism of inclusion and niceness—the liberalism of tolerance—was in. This hits much closer to today's American mainstream and made it possible for Democrats, for a change, to call Republicans "extremists" and have the charge stick (the very act of saying "no" to certain programs, of making firm moral distinctions on issues like abortion, marked Republicans as dangerously "judgmental"). It had seemed that Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky might be a reminder of the old kind of cultural liberalism, but, instead, it fit right in with the new (the very act of judging the President made Republicans suspect).

So, Democrats had regained their arguments on spending, found wedge issues of their own, and even discovered a way to marginalize Republicans culturally. But oftentimes in politics, it

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takes a personality to crystallize a given set of positions—a Michael Dukakis wearing a tank helmet. In Newt Gingrich, relentlessly attacked by the press and by mindless Democratic partisans, Democrats found their persona.

Gingrich suffers from a politician's curse of not being able to seem sincere when he fakes a smile. He is given to harsh-sounding statements, and his tone can sometimes be hectoring. None of this makes him "mean-spirited" or in any way speaks to the nature of his intentions. Yet the Democrats made his name an epithet, and even if this didn't directly sway a single voter, it helped poison the general atmosphere, as Gingrich came to stand for all that was wrong in the Republicans' opposition to spending, the assault-weapons ban, the President, and so on.

In the end, Gingrich wasn't particularly popular with his own colleagues, either. He had consolidated power in the Speaker's office, but also became increasingly isolated there, alienating his colleagues in the leadership, and letting his lack of discipline have free rein. When the November 1998 revolt against Gingrich began in earnest, it had about it an aspect of a reassertion of the *institution* against his aggrandizement. Bob Livingston's quasi-campaign manifesto, a letter to Gingrich, was a brief for giving him more control over his Appropriations Committee—a committee chairman's revenge.

So, 1998 was a world apart from 1994. The lessons of the centrist Clinton campaign in 1992, unlearned in 1993–94, Democrats had recovered, and then some. Gingrich the partisan attacker had seen his targets disappear and himself made the symbol of his own party's vulnerabilities. A changed world indeed. No wonder in a conference call with other Republican leaders after the November election Gingrich confessed to having no idea what to do next. Well, if it's any consolation, Mr. Gingrich, at the moment it's not clear that anyone else in the party does either. **NR**

Growth Cut

It's not the Fed that holds the key to growth.

STEPHEN MOORE

WITH the U.S. economy shifting into lower gear, all eyes in Washington and on Wall Street are riveted on the Fed. The prevailing view in both the financial and policymaking worlds is that Alan Greenspan has nearly unilateral power to pump enough antibiotics into the economy to prevent the global financial virus from reaching these shores. The two Fed rate cuts in the early fall did, after all, lift the Dow Jones by more than 1,100 points from its summer low.

But this preoccupation with the Fed is misguided and potentially dangerous. The economy does need some anti-recession insurance right now. But the pump-priming should not come from the Fed. Rather, it should come from alleviating the burden of taxes and, to a lesser extent, of regulation. Specifically, Congress should resist jaw-boning the Fed and instead enact a preemptive tax-rate cut.

If there is any single enduring economic lesson of the past twenty years, it is that loose monetary policy cannot offset the negative effects of a punitive tax and regulatory regime. Yes, a case can be made that monetary policy is currently too tight and that the Fed needs to loosen. But the Fed needs to do so not

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because growth is slowing, but because we are now in, or perilously near, a deflationary environment. The inflation rate in consumer durable items is –2.6 per cent for the past four quarters. That is unprecedented. In a typical automobile showroom today, the 1999 models are selling for less than the 1998s.

With gold and most other commodity prices falling, import prices plunging, and real interest rates at their lowest level in thirty years, the risk of a recurrence of inflation seems remote. Mickey Levy, the chief economist at NationsBanc, an inflation hawk who has been as close to the bulls'-eye in predicting the direction of the economy as anyone on Wall Street in the 1990s, forecasts a federal funds rate of 4.5 per cent by April of next year, down from 5 per cent today.

What is worrisome is that today's easy-money enthusiasts want more than a hedge against deflation. They are arguing that we should be willing to tolerate 3 or 4 per cent inflation to protect ourselves from becoming afflicted with global financial contagion. The theory, a relic of the Sixties and Seventies called the Phillips Curve, is that there is a trade-off between inflation and recession. More monetary growth can produce faster real economic growth. "If that simpleminded logic were true," notes Brian Wesbury, the former chief economist at the Joint Economic Committee of Congress and now at Griffin, Kubik, Stephens, and Thompson in Chicago, "then counterfeiting should be legal." Wesbury reminds us that the optimal policy for long-term economic growth is always and everywhere price stability. Any policy that deviates from price stability is sub-optimal for growth—and for the financial markets, too, for that matter.

NOVEMBER—THAT TIME OF YEAR WHEN ALL THE WORLD'S CHICKEN LITTLES MIGRATE SOUTH TO BUENOS AIRES FOR CLIMATE TALKS.

Falling inflation, in fact, may well be responsible for how well the American economy has performed after the Clinton tax-rate hike of 1993, which surprised many economists (including me). The higher tax rates probably knocked a half to one full percentage point off GDP growth in 1993 (the taxes were retroactive) and 1994, but thereafter the economy has soared. A large part of the explanation has been that the "inflation tax" fell from 4 per cent in 1990–92 to less than 1 per cent this year.

This drop in inflation has corresponded with accelerating growth and falling unemployment. In fact, during the 16-year wave of economic prosperity begun under Reagan, who was committed to making the dollar as good as gold, the CPI has fallen by roughly one-half percentage point per year. Over that same period, the unemployment rate has fallen by an average quarter-percentage point per year. (So much for the Phillips Curve.) The eradication of inflation has also spurred the most sustained capital investment boom and the greatest build-up in real wealth—with asset prices rising by an estimated $10 trillion—in world history. The long-term result of accommodating a little more inflation would be a little less economic growth, not a little more.

While monetary policy should focus on prices, tax policy can stimulate the real economy. Over the past five years, the tax burden has been creeping up by a half a percentage point of GDP per year—from 18.5 per cent in 1994 to a projected 21 per cent in 1999. Over the course of the past thirty years, a tax-to-GDP ratio of more than 20 per cent has typically sounded a Code Blue warning of recession.

Regulatory policy also has a vise grip around the economy. According to the most recent data compiled by Thomas Hopkins of the Rochester Institute of Technology, in 1998 the total economic cost of federal regulations was a record $700 billion. The regulatory "tax" on the economy is now roughly as large as the personal income tax.

Yet Republicans have retreated from any semblance of a pro-consumer deregulatory agenda at the same time Bill Clinton's federal agency heads have been on a unilateral rule-making rampage. The Heritage Foundation reports that, between April 1996 and April 1998, the Clinton regulation factory sent the Congress 8,675 new rules to review. Not even one was disapproved. If the Republicans can't roll back existing edicts, at the least they should declare a moratorium on new red tape until the global economic crisis subsides.

On the tax side of the equation, Congress now has the opportunity to—in the words of economist Larry Kudlow—"seize the Keynesian moment for supply-side tax-cutting purposes." Any self-respecting Keynesian economist would agree that, with the economy slowing and the potential of a mild recession on the horizon, now is not the time to be running budget surpluses. Yet in 1999, the Federal Government is expected to collect some $80 billion more in taxes than it needs to pay the bills. About one-quarter of these tax receipts are scheduled to be used to finance debt reduction ($60 billion) and about one- third to finance extra social spending ($20 billion).

To be sure, retiring debt lowers interest costs and thus benefits the economy. But that benefit is exceedingly small. Cutting tax rates—either the income or the payroll tax, by 20 per cent—would be a much more productive use of surplus funds. A reduction in tax rates would increase the after-tax rate of return on U.S.-based investments, thus luring tens of billions of dollars of additional foreign capital investment into the United States.

This $100–150 billion tax-rate cut for 1999 (retroactive to January 1) would not just stimulate the U.S. economy, but would serve as an antidote to the global economic crisis. If the United States cuts tax rates, most of the rest of the world will be compelled to cut their own, as in the 1980s, when worldwide tax rates fell by 30 per cent in response to the Reagan tax cuts. We don't need an International Monetary Fund to cajole countries to cut taxes–we should just give ourselves a strong dose of our own medicine. **NR**

Mr. Moore, an NR contributing editor, is director of fiscal policy studies at the Cato Institute.

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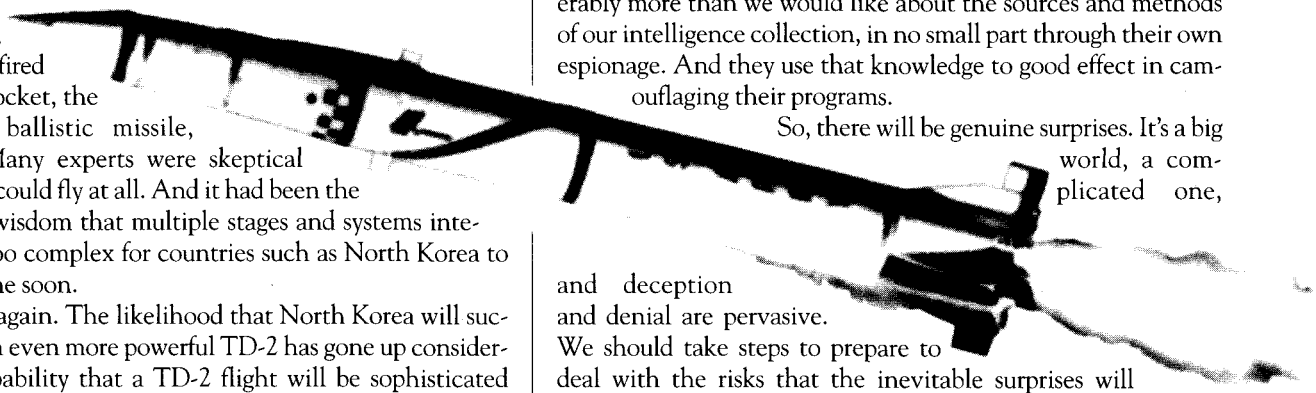
Surprise, Surprise

When it comes to ballistic-missile proliferation, expect the worst.

DONALD RUMSFELD



IN August, North Korea fired a three-stage rocket, the Taepodong-1 ballistic missile, over Japan. Many experts were skeptical that the TD-1 could fly at all. And it had been the conventional wisdom that multiple stages and systems integration were too complex for countries such as North Korea to achieve anytime soon.

Well, think again. The likelihood that North Korea will successfully test an even more powerful TD-2 has gone up considerably. The probability that a TD-2 flight will be sophisticated enough to exceed 5,000 to 6,000 kilometers in range, with a nuclear payload, has increased as well. And chances are that, whenever this happens, it will be considered—like the TD-1 launch—a surprise.

Welcome to the new world of ballistic-missile threats. The Gulf War taught regional powers that they are ill advised to try to combat U.S. and other Western armies, navies, and air forces. These nations can neither deter nor prevail against those with vastly greater conventional capabilities. So they naturally seek asymmetrical advantages and leverage that will enable them to change the calculations of Western powers.

The regional powers have several cost-effective options. Terrorism is one. Cruise missiles are another. They are increasingly attractive because they are both versatile and relatively inexpensive. And, third, there are ballistic missiles.

Some 25 to 30 countries either have or are seeking to acquire ballistic missiles, an enticing supplement to relatively modest armies, navies, and air forces. Like cruise missiles, ballistic missiles can be launched from land, sea, or air and have the flexibility to carry chemical, biological, or nuclear warheads. And they have the compelling advantage of being certain to arrive at their destinations—there being no defenses against them.

A bipartisan Ballistic Missile Threat Commission, established by Congress, recently came to a set of unanimous conclusions regarding the nature of the threat to the United States and how to avert it. (I served as chairman.) The Commission found that China and Russia continue to pose threats, and that each is on an uncertain path. Both North Korea and Iran could pose a threat within five years of a decision to do so, and we would be unlikely to know when such a decision was made for several years. And given that UNSCOM inspections are unlikely to remain in place, Iraq is in the same category.

The capabilities of these threatening nations are broader, more mature, and more rapidly evolving than had previously been reported, and the ability of U.S. intelligence to provide timely warning about them has been eroding. The Commission concluded that under some plausible scenarios—including abbreviated development programs that might involve testing in a third country—the United States may well have little or no warning before a hostile country deploys a missile system.

The emerging powers are secretive about their programs and increasingly skilled at deception and denial. They know considerably more than we would like about the sources and methods of our intelligence collection, in no small part through their own espionage. And they use that knowledge to good effect in camouflaging their programs.

So, there will be genuine surprises. It's a big world, a complicated one, and deception and denial are pervasive. We should take steps to prepare to deal with the risks that the inevitable surprises will pose. As Clausewitz wrote, "The unexpected is the prince of the battlefield."

The first step is to acknowledge reality. Foreign help and technology transfers are, in the Commission's view, more than a "wild card," they are a present fact. The contention that we will have ample warning of developments in nations with "indigenous" ballistic-missile programs—which has been the Administration's contention—is wrong. There's not a single nation on earth with a truly indigenous ballistic-missile program. Indeed, there may not have been such a program since Robert Goddard.

Russia and China have emerged as major suppliers of technology to missile-hungry countries. Among the second-tier countries, trade has burgeoned. For them, the development of ballistic-missile capabilities may well have become self-sustaining. These countries each have capabilities that the others do not. As they trade—whether it's knowledge, systems, materials, components, or technicians—they benefit from one another and are able to move forward on separate development paths, all of which are notably different from the ones historically followed by the United States and the Soviet Union?

To characterize these countries' programs as risky and unpredictable is to misunderstand the situation. These countries don't need to achieve the accuracy levels of the United States; they don't have the same concerns about safety. Nor do they need the high volume of production that the United States has sought. They are therefore capable of using technologies, techniques, and even equipment that we would have rejected as too primitive even three decades ago.

Will sanctions help? President Clinton recently complained that sanctions legislation causes the United States to "fudge" its assessments of foreign powers, so as to avoid the strictures of sanctions. Fudging can have a dangerous effect. There are several ways to do it, from simply ignoring something if it might make your superiors uncomfortable to selecting assumptions that

Mr. Rumsfeld, former Secretary of Defense, recently served as chairman of the U.S. Government Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States.

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assure your desired conclusions (e.g., studying whether the United States will have adequate warning of indigenous ballistic-missile programs, even though indigenous programs don't really exist today).

The effect of "fudging" is to warp and corrupt the intelligence process. Leaders have to create an environment that is hospitable to the truth—be it bad news or good news—not an environment that forces subordinates to trim, hedge, duck, and, as the President put it, "fudge."

The Commission unanimously recommended the overhaul of all U.S. practices and policies that depend on the expectation of ample warning about ballistic-missile deployment. We should also recognize that we live in a world where those who don't wish us well will inevitably gain the most dangerous weapons. In my view (though the Commission did not address this), the answer is to invest in the offensive and defensive capabilities—including a missile-defense program—that will allow us to live with these increasingly perilous and unseen threats.

Roberta Wohlstetter's brilliant book *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision* argues that "we were not caught napping at the time of Pearl Harbor. We just expected wrong. And it was not our warning that was most at fault, but our strategic analysis. We were so busy thinking through some 'obvious' Japanese moves that we neglected to hedge against the choice they actually made." Bombing Pearl Harbor may have seemed, given U.S. assumptions at the time, a somewhat "improbable" choice. But it wasn't, really. We provided the undefended target, and if we know anything from history, it is that weakness is provocative.

And which enemy will, tomorrow, be provoked by our willful weakness today? That's the problem and the prospect we must insure against. **NR**

All American?

Conservatism needs to become more thoroughly American.

CHARLES R. KESLER

CONSERVATIVES have a ready explanation for the disappointing election: it's the Republicans' fault. The Republican Party could hardly have run a more issueless campaign, and even those Republicans who had some issues and stuck to them seemed hard-pressed to say why. The diagnosis, in other words, is that once again the Republicans weren't conservative enough. But this is an argument that proves too much. In American history, intellectual and social movements have usually become effective precisely when they have given rise to or taken over a political party, and the GOP has been dominated by conservatives since 1964. Why, after more than three decades, have conservatives not built a better Republican party?

The fault, dear Brutus, lies not in Ken Starr, nor in the GOP's current lack of stars, but in ourselves—that is, in the conservative movement, which has always been more confident of what it is against than what it is for. During the long decades of the Cold War, this disposition was not an acute problem, and the conservative intellectual movement provided a rich political education for right-wing candidates and officeholders. With the Cold War's end, however, it is increasingly clear that the conservative movement as we have known it is over. More and more, conservatism lacks a common message or focus, and the education it offers citizens and politicians is splintered into myriad discussions of specific policies. Hence the conservative predicament. When faced with urgent threats from a common enemy, conservatives were strong and united; blessed with peace, prosperity, and the freedom in which to focus on their internal differences, they have grown restive and uncertain.

All the good enemies are gone, complain conservatives, because after Soviet Communism's demise American liberalism seems much less threatening. Liberals have been chastened, at long last, by the discovery that the vectors of history do not point inevitably to the left, and in response, many have "triangulated," that is, tacked to the center. In frustration, conservatives frequently turn on their own. The Cold War's end was bound to increase such infighting anyway, since the war had forced conservatism's factions to compromise: libertarians had to accept certain aspects of the "national security state," e.g., the draft, high defense spending, foreign alliances, an internal security apparatus; and traditionalists had to make their peace with the mass scale of modern life and warfare, the industrial economy, and the necessities of economic and scientific innovation.

Now many conservatives are engaged in a desperate hunt for the offending or off-putting strand within the movement. This search usually corners the religious Right, but libertarians come in for their share of criticism, too. These dissensions remind us that it is possible to have conservatives without having a unified conservative movement. Indeed, this was the situation in America before the mid-1950s. If it is not quite the plight of conservatives today, it may soon be again. For so long as conservatism remains basically anti-liberalism, the weakened condition of American liberals enfeebles conservatives, too, paradoxically.

THE NATIONAL POLITICAL TRADITION

What more could American conservatism be then, other than liberalism's nemesis? To begin with, it could be profoundly American. Yes, conservative candidates often drape themselves in the flag, but at the most basic level the conservative movement has a strained relationship with the American project. Both the movement's major strands—traditionalism and libertarianism—clash with the principles of the American Founding, affecting practical conservative politics in ways that we may not notice.

The most striking feature of traditionalist conservatism has always been how alienated it is from the roots of its own—that is, the American—political tradition. Take Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind*, a founding document of the conservative movement and still the best expression of the traditionalist school. Kirk enshrined a few Americans in his conservative pantheon—John Adams and John C. Calhoun, most prominent-

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ly—but he had little room for George Washington, Thomas Jefferson (whose "a priori concepts" and "French egalitarian theories" Kirk distrusted), James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, or Abraham Lincoln, to name a few. None of these thoughtful American statesmen endorsed the quasi-Burkean love of prescription, inequality, and the Romantic–organic view of society that Kirk himself embraced.

Kirk's conservatism, therefore, was never peculiarly American. It was consciously Anglo-American; more specifically, it took Burke's useful fiction that the British constitution had been the product of slow evolutionary growth and adaptation, and applied it to America, whose Revolution then became a "conservative restoration of colonial prerogatives." So much for the shot heard 'round the world! Until about 1774, Americans had in fact argued in favor of various conservative adaptations of the British constitution to colonial conditions; but from 1776 on, they insisted on new, emphatically republican constitutions of their own devising, based on the unalienable or natural rights of man. To quote Kirk's hero, John Adams, "There is no good government but what is republican," and the "only valuable part of the British constitution" had been republican in effect, if not in intent. The British political tradition contained valuable principles, then, which were sound not because they were British or traditional, but because they were good, i.e., in accordance with human nature.

John Trumbull, *The Declaration of Independence, 4 July 1776*

Kirk never admitted this, because he rejected freedom and equality as abstract principles and loathed revolution. Like Burke, he spoke occasionally of the real or genuine rights of man—the moral order in which prescription or tradition is a chief part of the law of nature. Unlike his great model, however, Kirk allowed prescription to define virtually all of natural justice: as the "natural" part of natural law receded under his touch, the "law" part—the legal, customary, and conventional realm—grew apace. Hence Kirk's "traditionalism," the belief in the abstract principle that all abstract principles are nonsense; that justice is to be discovered at history's margins, not in nature's intentions; and that reason, at least moral and political reason, is always properly a child of its times. For traditionalists, revolution with a capital R, based on appeals to nature or to abstract truths like human freedom and equality, is the greatest of political evils. Indeed, Burke's opposition to the French Revolution was the inspiration for modern conservatism—and according to Kirk, the star by which conservatives should steer in all subsequent political upheavals.

So, Kirk's traditionalism, and the type of conservatism based on it, have never been comfortable, really, with the American Revolution. They have tried to make peace with it by treating it as something neither very American nor very revolutionary, but the result has been to miss its entire significance in American politics. Examples abound of contemporary conservatives' wariness of the "Revolution principles," as Adams called them, on which the Founders took their stand. In fact, conservative politicians do not have to be self-conscious traditionalists to have absorbed this aversion to the concepts—indeed to the very language—of rights, equality, and justice.

How many times, for example, has the Republican Congress ducked the chance to eliminate race and gender preferences in federal hiring, contracting, and grant-making? Republicans, including many staunch conservatives, flee the issue mostly because they do not care to wage an uphill battle on an issue on which liberals presumptively command the moral high ground. In other words, they concede, without quite admitting it (perhaps even to themselves), that equality and justice are liberal causes, to be defined by liberals, defended by liberals, and implemented by liberals.

There are honorable exceptions, to be sure, as in California, where conservative activists forced Proposition 209 onto the ballot and succeeded in laying low the state's regime of racial and ethnic favoritism. But such examples are rare. When conservatives in political office have to accost fundamental principles, they prefer to do so indirectly, from the shadows, behind many veils. Conservatives avoid arguing about questions of justice whenever possible, which means they eschew politics (whose central concern is justice) whenever possible. On taxation, for instance, conservatives frequently defend a flat or flatter income tax on grounds that it will reduce inefficiencies in the economy, stimulate growth, increase family budgets, and produce as much tax revenue as the existing system. What of its superior justice? Few indeed are the conservative politicians who will condemn the basic unfairness of taxing extra increments of income—most often the fruits of diligence and hard work—at higher rates.

The equality of citizens under law, free employment opportunity, other aspects of tax policy—these are moral questions, too, when seen from the point of view of American principles; but the moral case for them often goes unmade by conservatives who are so depoliticized as to shun any appeal that cannot be reduced to a matter of efficiency, economy, interest, or tradition. Tradition can be a great and a good thing, of course, but it is never so merely because it is traditional; slaveholders had their ancestral ways, too. To tell right from wrong within a tradition, or among traditions, requires a moral standard that has a validity or goodness independent of the tradition: it requires an abstract principle.

Yet even in the familiar "social" disputes that currently roil our politics, conservatives seem cut off from the principles of

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the American Revolution. They invoke "traditional family values," for instance, as though the phrase itself were traditional. It is in truth a very recent phrase that tries, inadequately, to characterize and defend the American tradition of republican or democratic family life, rooted of course in the precepts of the Bible and of nature. Even worse, they invoke "traditional family values" as though being traditional were enough. In practice, the new phrase often means little more than the "family values" that a majority in the past or at present would like to see prevail. The populist conservatism of the last few decades converges here with Kirk's traditionalism to produce a kind of historical majoritarianism (what Chesterton called "the democracy of the dead").

But wanting to keep "family values" traditional—i.e., majoritarian—does not establish that these values are good.

■

Uncomfortable with moral argument, conservatives increasingly rest their case for morals legislation on majoritarianism.

■

Uncomfortable with moral argument, conservatives increasingly rest their case for morals legislation on majoritarianism, precisely because it appears to relieve them of the need to make moral arguments. They assume that they do not have to show why homosexual marriage, for example, is wrong if they can show that most Americans disapprove of it. The abortion issue is the exception to this tendency, precisely because conservatives cannot point with assurance to majority support for anti-abortion policies.

On the premises of traditionalism, then, the conservative movement is ill equipped to recognize, much less to rescue, a country largely defined by its traditional allegiance to universal principles of justice. This is not to gainsay the common conservative view that America's recent liberal revolution is akin, somehow, to the various Communist revolutions of the twentieth century; nor that all of these contemporary upheavals are descended ultimately from the French Revolution. But these later revolutions were most assuredly not extensions of the American Revolution. Returning conservatism to its American roots would in no way compromise the Right's principled opposition to these later revolts against human nature.

THE LIBERTARIANS

Today's libertarians, on the other hand, display another sort of wariness towards the American Founding. Although they are keen on individual rights and free markets, libertarians are divided on the moral foundation of individual rights. Most Chicago School economists (a powerful influence on modern libertarianism) believe that freedom "works," in the sense of generating far greater social prosperity and individual utility than non-free or socialist societies; and they do not see the need or possibility of justifying individual rights on any other basis. By contrast, most libertarian philosophers and publicists insist that liberty is valuable for its own sake, and would be even if it did not lead to greater individual and social prosperity.

Now, the utilitarian argument is true, so far as it goes; but it begs the question of why (and to what extent) economic prosperity is good, and it assumes that every individual's utility should count equally. The "rights utilitarians," as they are sometimes called, try to explain why every person should count as one, but they disagree on the basis of this elementary equality and hence its significance. Given these difficulties, the weight of the libertarian argument is on the side of bringing rights and utility as close together as possible, grounding the notion of individual rights in self-preservation and self-interest, and reducing the political morality of the American Revolution to the protection of mere life and a low sort of liberty.

Conservative politicians of a libertarian stripe value freedom and individual rights much more highly than do their traditionalist allies, to be sure, but because the libertarian definition of liberty is almost synonymous with the pursuit of private desire, these libertarians' public defense of liberty is much weaker than they think. Their "freedom" begins to sound suspiciously like a code word for self-interest (an imputation that many of them would endorse!). Libertarianism thus leaves citizens and politicians in much the same spot that traditionalism does: more at home with arguments about utility, efficiency, economy, and (spontaneously evolved) order than about justice.

The ascending moral connections among life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness cease to be a vital public concern for the libertarians, because for them happiness is mainly in the eye of the beholder. Even those who know better (Charles Murray, for instance), who recognize that there is some objective moral core to happiness, do not regard it as very relevant to the activities of government. Happiness is for the private sphere, whereas government is about the use of coercion to protect life, liberty, property, and the obligation of contracts. And of course, there are some sound points in this analysis.

But the fact that the law cannot know the conditions of supreme happiness in the next life does not mean it cannot know anything about the elements of happiness here and now. The separation of church and state does not imply a parallel separation of morality and politics. Although human reason cannot discern, by itself, the way to Heaven, reason can and does know much about the way to happiness. For instance, that courage is better than cowardice; wisdom better than ignorance or false knowledge; justice better than injustice; moderation better than intemperance. These moral propositions or truths are essential to a happy life, and to a free and self-governed life, as George Washington and virtually everyone else writing and speaking at the time of the Founding emphasized.

Laws inevitably shape morality, but the American Founders did not believe that the laws alone could do so. In fact, they appreciated that the general laws of a distant Federal Government could play—and ought to play—only a very limited role in this task. Here their prudence agreed with today's libertarian prejudices. At the same time, however, they expected state and local legislation to play a much larger role in encouraging the moral habits needed for self-government, through the exemplary sanctions of civil and criminal law—especially the wide scope for states' police power, which dealt with the details of public health, safety, and morals—and through public-sup-

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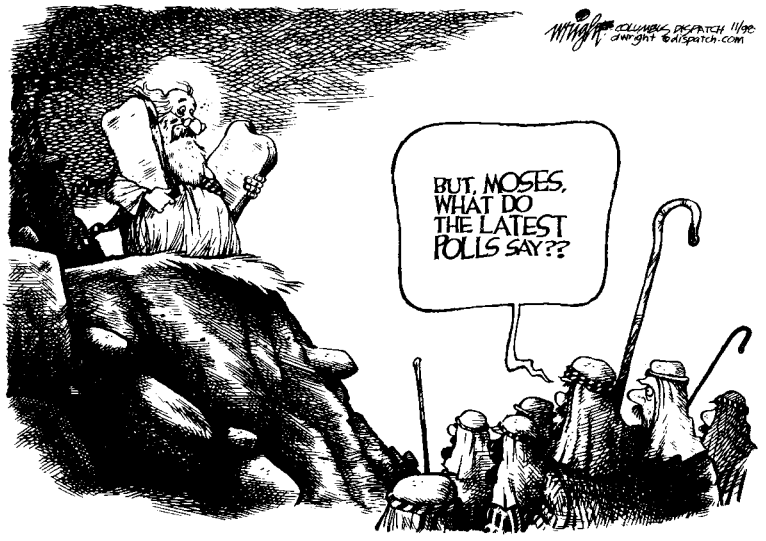
ported education. The statesmen of the early Republic realized, however, that even state and local legislation could accomplish only so much without the positive assistance of the primary character-shaping associations: families and churches.

In a republic, then, there is a public need for citizens with good character; but America's best statesmen have always understood that a public end does not necessarily have to be met solely or even partly by a public means. Before the modern welfare state, the public need to assist widows, orphans, the sick, and the elderly was met not only in various ways by local governments, but also by state laws that encouraged the incorporation of charitable hospitals, self-insurance associations, and the like. Today, similarly, the public need for an educated citizenry may best be met by using educational vouchers and charter schools to encourage competition with, and even within, the public school system. In short, not every public need or end can be met directly by government. Nonetheless, the public may use government, not only to protect life, liberty, property, and the obligation of contracts, but to elicit the character traits that help to keep limited government limited, and that help to make liberty a blessing rather than a curse.

One might combine these criticisms of latter-day traditionalism and libertarianism by saying that a reborn American conservatism, based on the principles of the American Revolution, would teach both morality and freedom, order and liberty, not as a fusion or agglomeration of opposites, but as inferences from the same set of principles. Those principles are the rights of man under the laws of nature. Now, one of the great achievements of the scholars (notably Leo Strauss and his students, but including many others) who helped, intentionally or not, to inspire the contemporary conservative movement was their reopening of the question of natural rights or justice. For the first time in perhaps a hundred years, it is now possible for us to return to the natural-rights doctrines of the American Founders in an intelligent way, to revive their moral and political enterprise and make it the heart and soul of a new American conservatism.



Practically speaking, this means a rediscovery of the moral basis and the moral argument for republican government. A restored Republic would entail a Federal Government that is much more limited than the present state, though energetic in pursuit of its limited objects. The inveterate conservative opposition to big government would shift in emphasis from hoarse calls to get the government out of our wallets and off our backs to a new indictment of big government as an insult to our rights, an offense against our equality, and a violation of our Constitution. To be sure, big government has always been a reliable target of conservative denunciation. Yet often the grounds of the conservative attack on it have been sandy—a few perfunctory invocations of the Tenth Amendment, warmed-over anger at the unholy expense of it all, some boilerplate about the imperial judiciary. The modern state offends republicanism even more profoundly than it offends federalism, however, and conservatives should reformulate their attacks along more provocative Constitutional lines—for example, stressing not only the cost of entitlement programs, but the manner in which they inveigle us into thinking that all our rights flow from government.

Even as economic conservatives ought to acknowledge that morality is essential to limited government, so religious and social conservatives should recognize that America is in many ways less free than it used to be. We suffer from too much license and not enough liberty, so to speak. On the one hand, the modern state's social programs encourage personal irresponsibility by socializing its costs. On the other hand, big government narrows personal freedoms essential to republicanism: the right to use and be secure in one's property; to donate money to political campaigns; to count as an equal, regardless of race or ethnicity, in the eyes of the law.

So today's manifold threats to liberty and morality stem mainly from the same source: modern liberalism's rejection of the original American understanding of self-government. Reacting piecemeal to this affront, each faction of the existing conservative movement has seized an important part of the truth, but there is something missing that can be supplied only by a more American, and more political, conservatism. Though in some ways conservatism is now in a position to reconnect itself with the Constitutionalist doctrines of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ultimately it is the conservatism of the Founders that we are seeking.

The conservatives of a century ago had one advantage over us, however. They saw modern liberalism in its youth, at its most theoretically audacious and before its projects had become familiar. By rediscovering America's principles, conservatives have it in their power to encounter liberalism afresh, to see it anew and as a whole for the first time in many decades, and thus to learn how radical a departure from our old regime it actually was. Unfortunately, many conservatives, too, have renounced the central principles of the American Founding, leaving conservatism adrift and confused. For with half of the movement alienated from American politics, and the other half scornful of all politics, what is left on which to build a political movement and a political party? If in the next century the United States is to regain its republican spirit and rescue Constitutional government, the conservative movement will first have to rediscover what about America it is trying, after all, to conserve. **NR**

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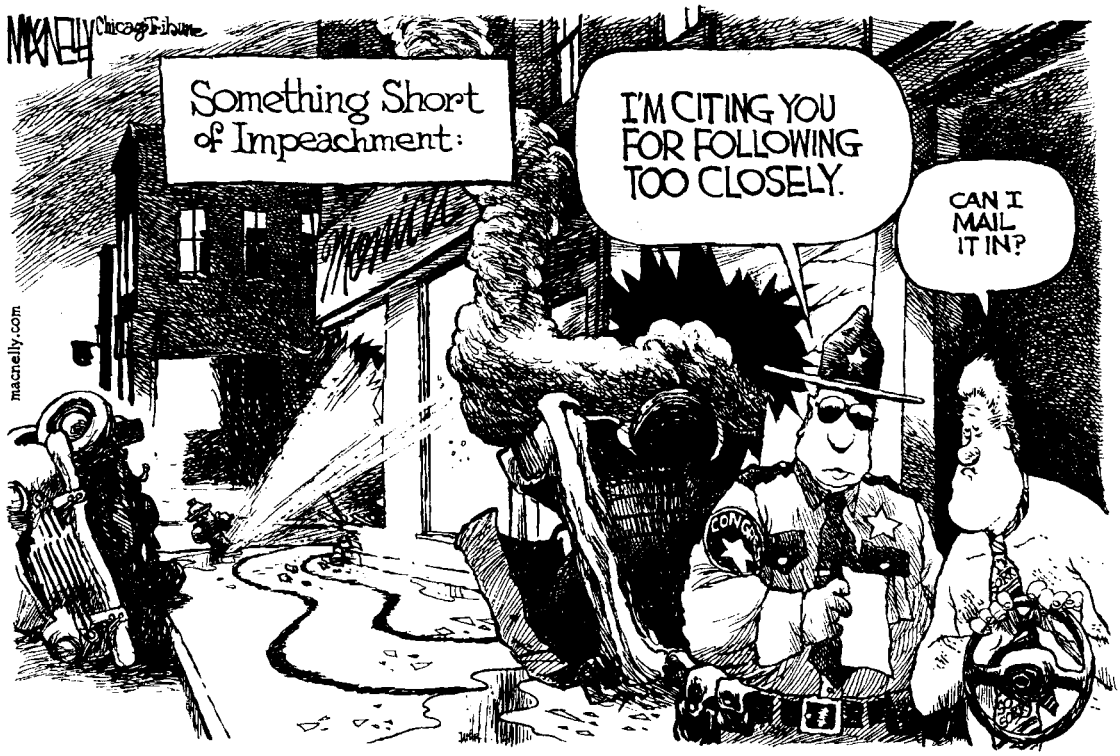

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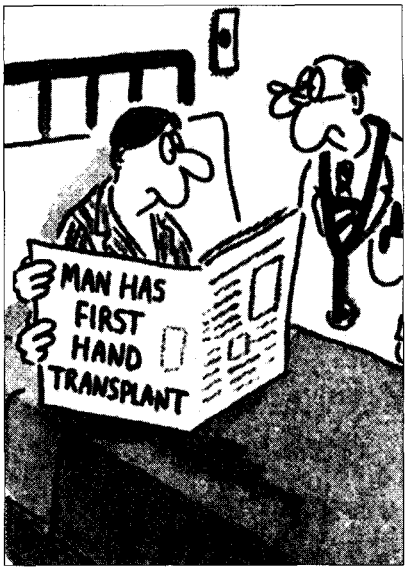

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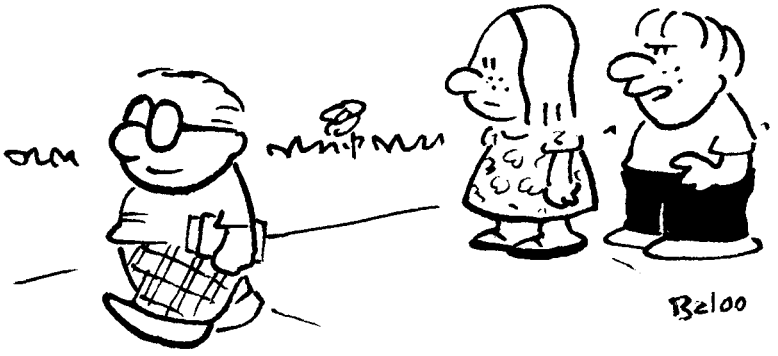

"Talk about stuck-up!—He has Masterpiece Theatre *action figures!"*

"You have been found in violation of community standards."

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JOIN BILL BUCKLEY AS WE CELEBRATE THE 10TH

CASPAR WEINBERGER, ALEXANDER HAIG, WILLIAM CLARK, RICHARD ALLEN, EDWIN MEESE, JAMES BUCKLEY
VERNON WALTERS, SAM NUNN, JOHN O'SULLIVAN, RICH LOWRY, KATE O'BEIRNE, & PETER RODMAN ON TH

NATIONAL REVIEW 1999 BALTIC CRUISE

London, Berlin, Oslo, Helsinki, Stockholm, St. Petersburg, Tallin, Bornholm, Århus, & Copenhagen. Sailing aboard Holland America Line's Spectacular* MS ROTTERDAM VI *July 18-30, 1999

1999. Has it already been ten years since the Berlin Wall fell? Has a decade passed since the Iron Curtain began to disintegrate?

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To mark the historic 10th anniversary of one of the greatest episodes of the 20th century, your favorite conservative magazine—the very journal that was at the forefront of the fight against Soviet totalitarianism—is proud to announce a special event: the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise***.

Joining **Bill Buckley** and *NR* editors **Rich Lowry**, **John O'Sullivan**, **Kate O'Beirne**, and **Peter Rodman** aboard Holland America Line's luxurious flagship, the MS *Rotterdam VI*, for this once-in-a-lifetime affair will be some of the biggest names of the battle against Communism, including former Defense Secretary **Caspar Weinberger**, former Secretary of State **Alexander Haig**, former White House National Security chiefs **William Clark** and **Richard Allen**, former Senator **Sam Nunn**, former Attorney General **Edwin Meese**, General **Vernon Walters** (former UN Ambassador, CIA nabob, and Ambassador to West Germany when the Wall a-tumbled!), and former Senator **James Buckley**, who ran Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty for the Gipper, (and who's also the brother of you-know-who!). The ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise*** will be your once-in-a-lifetime chance to meet the key players and tacticians who fought and triumphed in the epic battle to topple Soviet totalitarianism.

Through seven seminar sessions, numerous social events, and 12 nights of fine dining (when you'll be enjoying intimate meals with our special guests), the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise*** will provide you with a special, unique opportunity to hear the inside story on how some great men and women worked together to pull off the greatest feat of modern times: restoring freedom to hundreds of millions of oppressed people.

Imagine yourself discussing the roll-back of the Soviet threat with **Caspar Weinberger**. Or finding out from **William Clark** and **Vernon Walters** how Ronald Reagan forged an alliance with the Vatican to keep Poland's Solidarity movement alive. Or learning from **Ed Meese** the inside-the-Oval Office details of how the Gipper battled the Evil Empire. Or asking **Al Haig** how he coordinated anti-Soviet policies with America's allies. Or finding out from **Sam Nunn** the key support this fight received from Democrats (well, some Democrats). Or hearing from **Jim Buckley** how an embattled American radio outfit kept hope alive for millions

NR'S GIFTS: FREE LUXURY BERLIN EXCURSION ...

July 22, 1999, will be a great day for *NR* cruisers. Early that morning the *Rotterdam VI* will dock in Warnermünde, Germany, where we'll hop on a luxury train for a trip through the lush countryside. Our destination: Berlin. There, air-conditioned motor coaches will take us from one historic landmark to another, including, of course, the remains of the infamous Wall. From dawn till dusk, you'll enjoy great sights, food, drinks, and companionship. This special bells-and-whistles excursion costs $400 per person. But it's yours, FREE, as *National Review*'s "thank you" for joining us on this once-in-a-lifetime trip!

... PLUS *NR* WILL PAY FOR ALL THE "EXTRAS"!

Port fees, taxes, transfers, gratuities—those "incidental" costs add up. For the Baltic cruise, they will run roughly $425.00 per person. But as yet another way of saying "thanks," *NR* is picking up this. All told, the Berlin tour plus the "incidentals" is a whopping $825.00 per person value, at no cost to you. How can you say "No" to that?!

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ANNIVERSARY OF THE BERLIN WALL'S FALL WITH

of Europeans. Or reliving with **Bill Buckley** his hand-to-hand fighting in the public arena with America's apologist Left.

All of this can, and will, happen on the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise***. The question is, will you be there?

We hope so. On top of all the discussion of great events, on top of the celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Berlin Wall's fall, the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise*** will be a phenomenal travel extravaganza that will bring you face to face with northern Europe's most historic cities and most beautiful sights.

The "Voyage of the Vikings and Czars," as Holland America has dubbed the cruise, is one of the most sought-after vacations, and for good reason: the sights are so stunning, the ports so beautiful, and the "season" so short that most 1999 Baltic cruises are already sold out!

But don't fret: *NR* has a lock on 225 cabins (over 60 are *already* gone!) for this special July voyage—but only for a limited time, so you must act quickly. Here's our schedule:The floating paradise for this special journey is the *Rotterdam VI*, Holland America's new

flagship (everything is in mint condition, and one step above top notch). On board this impeccable vessel you will find every-thing—pools, shops, and lounges galore, plus a casino, java bar, library and puzzle room, spa (with sauna, masseuse, and steam bath), beauty salon, movie theater, tennis courts, running track, and so much more. Whether it's day or night, the *Rotterdam VI* offers you endless entertainment and activities. And as for the sumptuous cuisine, well, it can be summed up in one delicious word: *wunderbar*!

FANTASTIC EUROPEAN ITINERARY

LONDON is the departure point for the *Rotterdam VI*, which will visit:
OSLO, Norway's cosmopolitan capital and the citadel of all things Viking;
ÅRHUS, Denmark's charming port and pit-stop to visit numerous sights, including Hans Christian Andersen's birthplace;
WARNERMÜNDE/BERLIN, where you can take our special tour to visit the historic sights (Checkpoint Charlie, the Wall Museum, the Brandenburg Gate, and so much more) of Germany's capital;
BORNHOLM, the popular Danish island famous for its glass, ceramics, and herring!;
STOCKHOLM, Sweden's capital, home to such glorious waterways that it's called the "Venice of the North";
HELSINKI, Finland's stunning capital, renowned for its gleaming art and shopping districts, your gateway to Lapland;
ST. PETERSBURG, the ancient home to the Czars where you'll find the Hermitage, the Winter Palace, and the spectacular Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul;
MUUGA/TALLIN, Estonia's capital and a tourist's paradise—museums abound in the most "intact" medieval city in Northern Europe; and
COPENHAGEN, the final port for this fantastic cruise, famous for its cobblestone streets and squares (why not stay an extra day or two in this walker's paradise?!).

Even better are the *Rotterdam*'s staterooms—they are elegant and large, and some feature incredible extras (there are many with big, private verandahs—but they're *going fast*!). And on the "Concierge Deck," where the *Rotterdam VI* sports 4 Penthouse Suites (each one some 1,126 square feet) and 36 Suites (565 square feet), there's the

exclusive "Neptune Lounge" (it features a library and a concierge office—with an officer dedicated to handling all your special requests!). No matter which type of cabin you reserve, or in which restaurant you dine, or of what amenities you take advantage, you'll be overwhelmed by Holland America Line's service, style, attentiveness, and grace.

Prices for the ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise***—your unique opportunity to enjoy a luxury vacation while celebrating the demise of the USSR with America's greatest Cold Warriors—start at only $4,999 per person. (*NR* prices are a big savings off Holland America's "catalogue" rates, plus *NR* is paying for the special Berlin excursion and port fees, taxes, gratuities, and transfers—a combined $825 per-person value!)

Join William F. Buckley Jr., Caspar Weinberger, Alexander Haig, William Clark, Richard Allen, Edwin Meese, James Buckley, Vernon Walters, John O'Sullivan, Rich Lowry, Sam Nunn, Kate O'Beirne, and Peter Rodman for the cruise of your life. Call today for your ***National Review 1999 Baltic Cruise*** Information Kit. It's **FREE**, and includes everything you'll need to know about this spectacular celebration. Call 1-800-548-2184 today, before the cabin of your choice is *gone*!

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THE VICE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

November 15, 1998

Dear Rusty,
The worst thing about politics, Rusty, is that it can drive two people apart.

For the weeks leading up to the election, Tipper and I were kind of like two of those big glaciers up north. Only in our case, we didn't have any global warming to look forward to.

Tipper's a news-show junkie, if you remember. So while I was out there on the hustings, making speeches, raising money, getting those networks in place for next year, Tip was sitting at home watching the pundits add up the number of House and Senate seats we were supposed to lose.

Needless to say, there weren't a lot of . . . marital relations going on in those weeks. It was me getting up early, getting dressed, "See you, Tip," she'd just roll over, me flying someplace, raising $150,000, flying home, Tipper watching CNN or CNBC or MSNBC or FoxNews, alone, in the dark, "Hey there, Tip," no response, me falling asleep, then me getting up early . . . well, you get the picture.

I'd come home and say, "Hey, Tip, Boxer's looking good in California," and give her a little squeeze. She'd just look at me like I was some kind of crazy person. "Michael Barone says turnout is going to be low," she'd mumble. "And don't touch me."

Election night was the worst. We both had a few fundraisers to attend. By the time we got home, we were both tired and cranky. I was drinking herb tea in the kitchen when the fight started.

"So," Tipper said icily, "are you going to bother to challenge Kerrey or Bradley, or should we just go straight for the Tennessee statehouse?"

"Tipper . . ." I said, wearily.

"It's going to be a bloodbath, Al. That's what they're predicting. The Republicans are going to come out stronger, and we're going to limp into next year. And then, do you know what's going to happen?"

"What?"

"We'll be like, yesterday. Walter and Joan Mondale. It'll be habitats and breast-cancer research and . . . and . . . and . . . "

"And what, Tip?"

"And OBSCURITY!" she shouted. "What are you going to run on? Free trade? Welfare reform?"

"Probably," I said. "Those are popular issues, Tip." I touched her arm gently.

"Yes, they are," she snapped. "With Republicans. And don't touch me."

I didn't want to argue with her anymore. I went upstairs to the bedroom, and collapsed on the bed in my suit. I didn't even take out the fundraising checks that were in my jacket pocket, which I ordinarily keep in a little velvet box by the bed.

I woke up a few hours later. The checks in my pocket were rustling. Tipper was nuzzling my neck and trying to slip off my jacket.

"Tipper," I said, groggily, "what's going on?"

"Schumer just won in New York," she murmured in my ear. "Take off your tie."

"Tipper, you're crinkling up my checks," I said.

"They're projecting two Senate seats," she whispered sensuously. "Take off your shoes."

I did. It was a little weird getting romantic with Tipper while Al D'Amato was on the television, but not as weird as you might think. By the time Boxer and Gray Davis were declared the winners in their respective races, we had dragged a couple of TVs into the room and . . . how can I put this? . . . the Gore marriage was fully restored.

Tipper's regained her confidence in me, Rusty, which means a lot. Though, as you know, I never once wavered. Because there's one thing I've learned being such an integral part of this Administration: there's no such thing as a fatal error. We're blessed. And best of all, Tip and I are back . . . together. The night that Gingrich resigned, it was like we were back in college.

That's the great thing about politics, Rusty. It can heal a marriage in trouble.

Your pal, Al

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Updike at an Angle

RICHARD BROOKHISER

Bech at Bay, by John Updike (Knopf, 241 pp., $23)

SOME writers write best at an angle from themselves—choosing subjects well-removed from their own life experience. This was one of the great rediscoveries of Modernism, however quickly it degenerated into a tic. John Updike still profits from it. His early Sixties *succès de scandale*, *Couples*, which depicted the copulating of what were not yet called yuppies (read: Updike and his friends), is long, earnest, embarrassing, and indigestible. The novels about Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom are far better and benefit from the fact that their hero is an average-IQ ex-basketball star who never left his pokey Pennsylvania home. While also a Pennsylvania native, Updike is smart, plays golf, and went to Harvard. But that single experience, shared by Updike and Rabbit, can exert a crippling gravitational pull on Rabbit's story. Updike's most sprightly work is enlivened by obvious fantasy, or pretense: two novels about the Devil (*The Witches of Eastwick*, *Roger's Version*); one about an African dictator (*The Coup*); and three collections of short stories about a somewhat famous Jewish novelist, Henry Bech (*Bech: A Book*, *Bech is Back*, and now *Bech at Bay*).

Updike, it is true, has as much in common with Bech as he does with Rabbit Angstrom. The two men are in the same line of work, and the work they produce shares a reputation for being elaborate (their critics would say, fussy). They junket to the same places, belong to the same prestigious literary societies, and collect the same sorts of

John Updike by Roman Genn

encomia. But Henry Bech's ethnicity and abode (he is a Jewish New Yorker, who, if he voted, probably went for Chuck Schumer) provide enough of a distraction that Updike can have fun. When he has other things besides his swing to worry about, Updike sails his ball to the green. In a letter to Updike that appears as the foreword to the first collection, Bech calls the work "a little *jeu* of a book." The pun encapsulates the trick, and the means by which it is accomplished.

We first met Henry Bech in the late Sixties, his early forties. He had a youthful success with a quasi-Beat tale of rampaging motorcyclists, called *Travel Light* (despite the fact that he had never been, or met, a biker). Two books followed, one a flop, then the long silence of self-doubt and blockage. In the early Eighties there came a reprieve. Bech got married long enough to get himself working again, and produced a trashy bestseller (*Think Big*). Now he is in his seventies, sinking back to his lifetime average of low productivity and much fret.

The subject of the Bech books is the lit biz, and anyone even marginally interested in it will find them a delight. Probably the funniest thing Updike has ever written is his hero's solemn bibliography, including all the book reviews he has written, and all the reviews that have been written of him. "Rain King for a Day," wrote an envious Bech in 1959 (in a review of Saul Bellow); "Bech's Noble Novel: A Case Study in the Pathology of Criticism," wrote a fiercely loyal Norman Podhoretz in 1963. The stories ask what the value of the writer's life might be. In a childhood flashback, Bech is taken by his mother to the annual ceremony of a national academy of arts and letters. Its members, arranged on the academy's stage, strike him as "the flower of the arts in America, its rabbis and chieftains, souls who while still breathing enjoyed their immortality." By the time he himself joins, the view looks very different. The Bech books also reflect Updike's obsessions, religion and sex—obsessions because his restless thoughts never come to anything: unable to settle on a creed or a girl, he worries the subjects like the site of a pulled tooth.

All these themes are reprised in *Bech at Bay*. Gotham works itself into a frenzy when Bech is awarded the Nobel Prize. "If the time for an American winner had at last come round again, then a deliberate affront must be read in this bypassing of solid contenders like Mailer, Roth, and Ozick, not to mention Pynchon and DeLillo," intones the *New York Times*. BECH? WHODAT??? asks the *Daily News*. A wheezing elderly literary critic very much like the late Alfred Kazin gives Bech a lecture on America and religion:

> These goyim came here thinking . . . the Holy Ghost had them by the hand. The Holy Ghost. Who the hell is that? Some pigeon, that's all . . . anybody knows. Those first winters . . . they'd never seen anything like it . . . back in England. They stuck it out . . . but that God-awful faith . . . Bech . . . when it burns out . . . it leaves a dead spot.

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Love it or leave it . . . a dead spot. That's where America is . . . in that dead spot.

Bech receives this speech because he has broken into Kazin's apartment to kill him, in revenge for bad reviews over the years. This is the premise of the next-to-last story in *Bech at Bay*, enacted with a number of victims, and it leaves an acrid taste. While the fantasy of a writer offing his tormentors is funny, it is not something the series can accommodate. Bech's sins do not run to murder, and though he is make-believe he is not inconsistent. The last story is damaged by something almost as bad as murder: the goo-goo pride of old goats over the babies produced by their shiny young bed candy. See, they say, in senile hubris, immortal at last!

This is a cavil. Updike wrote of Henry Bech what can be said of Updike himself: he has "tried to write his own books rather than books others wanted him to write." The best are interesting, moving, and amusing—and those first two qualities are stronger in the presence of the third. Worth a Nobel? Why not? **NR**

Tragic Justice

JOHN O. McGINNIS

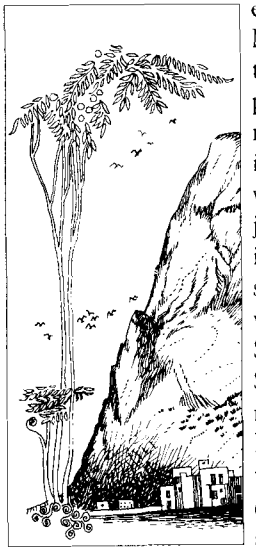
Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary, by Juan Williams (Times Books, 480 pp., $27.50)

THIS book recounts one of the saddest tales of a Supreme Court Justice ever told. Thurgood Marshall emerged from modest circumstances to lead a crusade against racial discrimination, culminating in the victory of *Brown* v. *Board of Education*. He was appointed to the Court as a symbol of racial equality. But when he resigned from that position a few years before his death, he was a bitter and querulous character, a shadow of the charismatic and courageous leader America once knew. What happened to him?

Juan Williams's book is most successful in recreating the vanished world of Marshall's upbringing. Born in Baltimore to lower-middle-class parents, he grew up in what we now would call the inner city, but in a milieu where his father and mother worked hard and remained together. Williams draws a picture of a community that maintained the quiet dignity of self-reliance even in the face of economic hardship and social prejudice.

From an early age, Marshall was a gifted storyteller, and in high school he became a skilled debater. After somewhat raucous college days, he acquired the self-discipline to graduate as one of the top students at Howard Law School. One of his early victories in civil rights was to win the admission of a black college graduate to the University of Maryland Law School, which had turned the man down because of his race.

In this initial litigation, Marshall did not challenge the prevailing doctrine that the state could provide separate institutions for different races so long as they were equal. Instead, he proved that the state did not provide any equal alternative for legal education. One of Marshall's greatest assets as a litigator was common sense in choosing the arguments that had the greatest chance of success. As head of the NAACP's legal team, he shifted to the argument that separate institutions were inherently unequal only when the Supreme Court itself had begun chipping away at the doctrine of separate but equal.



Marshall also displayed considerable political acumen. He shamed one Southern senator who wanted to take a vacation in Bermuda to avoid voting for anti-lynching legislation. He used his considerable personal charm to defuse potentially violent situations when he represented black persons accused of crimes in the South. After *Brown* he recognized that infiltration of the NAACP by Communists would be disastrous for the civil-rights movement and thus made common cause with J. Edgar Hoover to expel them. He also had the good sense to oppose black separatists and to insist that civil rights be seen as part of a larger effort to guarantee individual rights for all. Throughout his time in the civil-rights movement, Marshall was both single-minded and prudent—a rare combination in a leader of any cause.

Weary of battles with militant blacks and Southern school boards, Marshall finally left the NAACP for federal appointments—first as a federal appeals court judge in 1961 and then as Solicitor General in 1965. In neither of these jobs did he distinguish himself. Nevertheless in 1967 President Johnson appointed him to the Supreme Court.

■

Since he did not have any real interest in most legal issues, Thurgood Marshall came to view constitutional law through the prism of race.

■

While other black lawyers like William Hastie had more judicial experience and more wide-ranging legal ability, Johnson wanted political credit for nominating the legal embodiment of black aspirations. Thus Marshall's appointment is confirmation of the truth that, once merit is subordinated to race as a criterion of selection, symbolism will triumph over substance.

Since he did not have any real interest in most legal issues, Justice Marshall came to view constitutional law through the prism of race rather than view race from the perspective of individual rights. Because he was not well-suited for his judicial position, he became increasingly angry and sensitive to slights. He once walked out of a banquet at the Supreme Court when the Solicitor General omitted his name from the chronological list of Justices. (He was going to celebrate Marshall's whole career at the end of his speech.) Marshall paid a high personal price for others' need for a symbol.

American Revolutionary is at its weakest in its discussion of Marshall's years

Mr. McGinnis is a professor at Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University.

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on the Court. Williams does not have a command of constitutional jurisprudence and frequently turns complex legal issues into political cartoons. The book does demonstrate, however, that Marshall consistently joined William Brennan in constructing the legal framework for welfare-state liberalism—a framework that would do much to destroy the virtues of the kind of community that had produced Marshall. It also allows us glimpses into the fatuous defenses that liberals made of his general inattention. One former clerk says Marshall was only interested in "people's law," like civil rights. Of course, separation of powers, federalism, and property rights are as essential to preserving the liberty of people as civil rights.

At the end of his career, Marshall was reduced to publicly denouncing the original Constitution as well as Presidents Reagan and Bush. In the future, Marshall's own reputation will be one of the best barometers of our progress in civil rights. When it is generally recognized that he was both a great lawyer and a poor Justice, we will have a society more at ease both with equal rights and the absence of ethnic preferences. **NR**

Pod People

CHILTON WILLIAMSON JR.

An Empire Wilderness: Travels into America's Future, by Robert D. Kaplan (Random House, 393 pp., $27.50)

ASKED by an Oregon basket-weaver what the book he was researching was about, Robert D. Kaplan replied that it had to do with the question of whether Americans will be moved a half-century from now by the music of John Philip Sousa played on Inauguration Day. After months spent on the road—in automobiles and commercial buses; between Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and Portland, Oregon; Mexico City, and Vancouver, British Columbia—Kaplan foresees a future in which Sousa's marches have been forgotten completely and the composer himself is remembered as Dr. John Philip Seussa, the long-dead author of a series of amusing children's books.

Supposedly reaffirmed and strengthened, like broken bones, by the Civil War, the bonds of American union are loosening, Kaplan believes, in a process of denationalization. The result may be something like James Madison's vision of the United States as a huge geographical expanse governed constitutionally but without patriotic awareness.

■

Robert Kaplan can describe the collapse of American civilization, but he fails to explain it.

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This country once possessed a unique culture and identity, but is today devolving (insensibly, as Gibbon would have said) into a congeries of city-states and combining into regional associations like the long-foreseen conglomerate nations of Cascadia or Mex-America. The leviathan state of Franklin Roosevelt's, Harry Truman's,

Mr. Williamson is the author of *The Immigration Mystique: America's False Conscience* (Basic).

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and Dwight Eisenhower's day is, Kaplan suspects, finished; likely it will be replaced by a "flexible, lightweight" Federal Government entrusted with the responsibility for guarding America's nuclear arsenal, regulating water development in the West, and managing the federal lands. Behind these changes, Kaplan discerns the rise of a "rooted cosmopolitan class" segregated in "urban pods" like Omaha, Nebraska, or Orange County, California: "a network of vast suburban blotches separated by empty spaces," connected by satellite to similar pods in the United States as well as to the great foreign capitals.

Inhabitants of the pods will be Americans no longer but only "resident expatriates." No agreement on culture will exist, but the primacy of economic gain will be as much a matter of revered consensus as "diversity" is today. Tradition and civic virtue will be dead words, libertarian individualism rampant. Civic government will be replaced by corporate government. The rich, locked away in gated communities protected by private police, will be more concerned for the well-being of their counterparts overseas than for that of their less fortunate "compatriots" a few miles away. Meanwhile the underclass will continue to self-segregate and grow, tranquilized by gambling, spectator sports, and freedom below-the-belt.

Democratic institutions will thus wither. Waves of impoverished Latinos, pouring across the Southwest border, will push Mexico to the north, while the knitting of the elite class in British Columbia with that of Portland and Seattle will draw Canada slowly southward. The old East–West continental axis, created largely by America's white European middle class, will be replaced by a North–South one dominated in the North by whites and Asians and, in the South, by Mexicans, Indians, and mestizos. As Canada comes apart, New England might shack up with Quebec. And the absorption of Florida into the Caribbean Basin could result, as has already happened with Miami. Christianity—and other traditional religions—will grow increasingly attenuated as the religious impulse itself, influenced by environmentalists in the big Western cities, turns to nature-worship as in the pagan world of the ancients.

Ten years ago, I began work on a book making essentially the same predictions, which I never completed. I knew what I thought of this not-so-distant future, but it isn't at all clear how Kaplan—like many another prophet—feels about what he has witnessed, or intuited. For him, it seems to be in part the happy dream of a time when we will all look like Tiger Woods, in part a nightmare of a continent rebarbarized.

In the end, Kaplan can describe the collapse of American civilization, but he fails to explain it. He is a man who has spent much of his career away from home as a foreign reporter, and it shows. The United States is in a sense a foreign country to him. By now, all but the sort of well-heeled Americans who have no idea what a quart of milk costs at the supermarket have some experience of that subset of the underclass that rides America's Greyhounds. Yet Robert Kaplan, traveling by bus between Albuquerque and Amarillo, was appalled at the behavior he saw in neighboring seats. It seems not to have occurred to him that the "global materialism" of his Pod People is only a polite and polished reflection of the moral anarchy of the Bus People, the two having arisen from what amounts essentially to a belief in nothing—or possibly, as Chesterton put it, a belief in anything. **NR**

Gay Narcissus

NORAH VINCENT

Love Undetectable, by Andrew Sullivan (Knopf, 265 pp., $23)

ANDREW SULLIVAN has become so central to any discussion of gay politics in America that one rarely comes across such a discussion without hearing his name or seeing his talking head. During his stint as editor of *The New Republic*, Sullivan popularized the debate over gay marriage. Among other achievements, he dedicated an entire issue of *TNR* to the topic, published a reader on the subject entitled *Same-Sex Marriage: Pro and Con*, and wrote *Virtually Normal*, a tripartite argument about homosexuality. Sullivan was roundly criticized by the radical gay left

■

It is hard to escape the feeling that Sullivan is writing merely for and about himself.

■

for pandering too much to the mainstream. Meanwhile many conservatives disliked his attempt to carve a place for homosexuals coyly beside, if not within, the normal.

Most recently, in a *New York Times* op-ed, Sullivan weighed in on the latest gay question: Can reparative psychotherapy make gays into heterosexuals?

> If someone genuinely feels he cannot live with himself as a gay man and decides to submit to grueling therapy and join a particular sect of American Protestantism to be able to live a heterosexual life, then who am I to stand in his way? These conflicts are so deep, these choices so personal, that only the individual can resolve them. But by the same token, doesn't the "ex-gay" owe the same tolerance to me?

This is vintage Sullivan—sound, fair, respectful, and clear. There are no hysterical or tendentious notes in his work. His prose is often inviting, earnest, gracious even. In this regard, Sullivan's latest book, *Love Undetectable*, is in part very much like its predecessor: a careful, measured argument about homosexuality in three parts. But it's also an AIDS memoir masquerading as cultural commentary.

The volume's first essay, "When Plagues End," measures the new mood among the AIDS-afflicted. Having once faced imminent death, now with the help of the newly discovered protease inhibitors, they have reduced the

Miss Vincent is a writer living in New York City.

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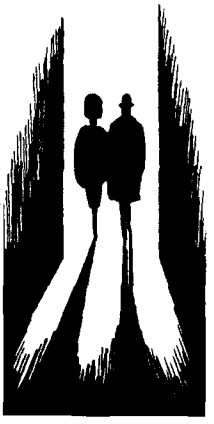
viral load in their bloodstreams to undetectable levels. As Sullivan puts it, AIDS was once a death sentence. Now it's a life sentence, and the psychological ramifications of this reversal are as complex as perhaps only Albert Camus could have envisioned—i.e., living is harder than dying; mundanity can be more wearying than mortal suffering.



Yet, much as he wants to retain a critical distance, Sullivan's reverential take on the so-called End of AIDS has an unmistakable whiff of narcissism about it. He concedes, for example, that AIDS has not by any means ended among the populations it most affects (Africans especially), yet he goes on to assert unapologetically that "some time toward the end of the millennium in America, the plague of AIDS went."

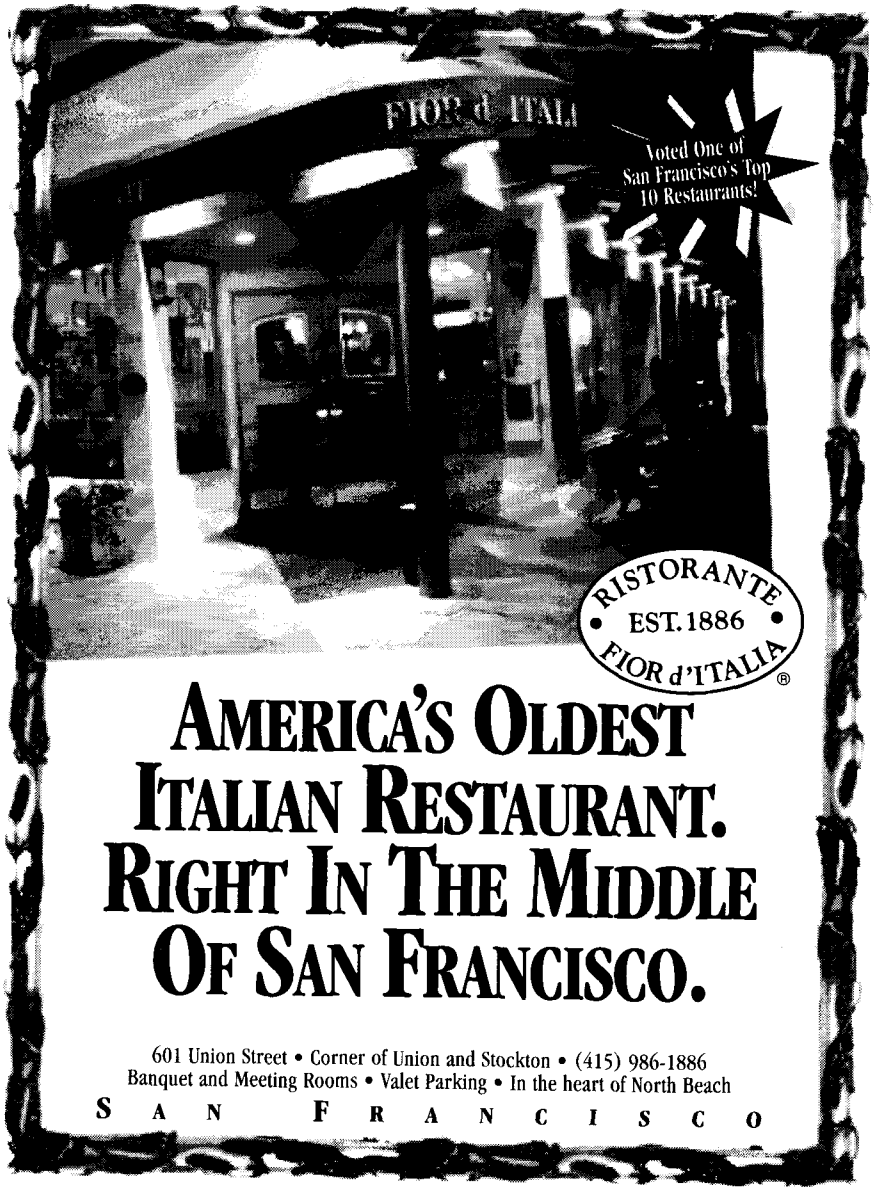
It's hard to escape the feeling that Sullivan is writing merely for and about himself, while trying to convince us, and himself, that he's writing for and about the human condition. He wants to make his life experience universal, but it's not. AIDS may be over for Sullivan, but it isn't for most of the rest of the world, and a good many Americans.

Sullivan's title, "When Plagues End," is misleading in another way. He insists on giving us a pious, sometimes teary post-mortem of a sexually transmitted disease that he insists was a plague. "A plague," he argues, "is something that cannot be controlled . . . something that robs human beings of the ability to respond in any practical way. . . . [B]y its unpredictability and by its devastation, plague asks questions disease often doesn't." By Sullivan's definition, "disease . . . is generally diagnosable and treatable, with varying degrees of success; it occurs at a steady or predictable rate."

Sullivan wants to use the word "plague" because it carries more existential weight than the word "disease," and considerably less blame. By Sullivan's own definitions, AIDS (in the developed world) is emphatically not a plague. It may have qualified as such in the early Eighties, before we knew how it was communicated and how to test for it, and it may still qualify as such in Africa. But by the mid Eighties it was diagnosable in the West, somewhat controllable, and most of all avoidable. AIDS is a disease, and it isn't over.

In the second essay, "Virtually Abnormal," Sullivan takes on the psychoanalytics of homosexuality, focusing on Freud's unexpectedly egalitarian perspective on gays, and then using that perspective to demolish the arguments of modern reparative therapists like Charles Socarides. This is the strongest section of the book, by far. Sullivan writes: "So, homosexuality, for Freud, was never inherently pathological or sick. Quite the reverse. 'I am . . . of the firm conviction,' he famously wrote to the newspaper *Die Zeit* in 1905, 'that homosexuals must not be treated as sick people.'"

Sullivan also quotes from what he calls a "now-celebrated document," a letter Freud wrote to an American mother offering advice about her gay son. Freud's letter reads: "Homosexuality is assuredly no advantage, but it is nothing to be ashamed of, no vice, no degradation, it cannot be classified as an illness." Sullivan goes on to build a case for psychological normalcy, which, if you put tremendous stock in Freud and psychoanalytic theory, is convincing. If you don't, then what he was to say is his-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torically interesting, but practically irrelevant.

The final essay, "If Love Were All," is a meditation on friendship that draws heavily on Aristotle's treatment of the subject in the *Nichomachean Ethics*. Sullivan also rehashes various theories on philial love offered by Cicero, Montaigne, C. S. Lewis, E. M. Forster, and others. Sullivan adds little to this pantheon, except his own experience of losing a friend to AIDS. As in the first essay, it seems that Sullivan uses a grandiose notion of capital "F" friendship to justify yet another AIDS memoir. His pain is real, and at times moving, but in the end this essay boils down to one sad, but mundane, assertion: "I grieve." Unfortunately, grief alone does not a book make. Sullivan's feelings are all dressed up by his intellect, but they have almost nowhere to go. **NR**

By the Numbers

JOHN DERBYSHIRE

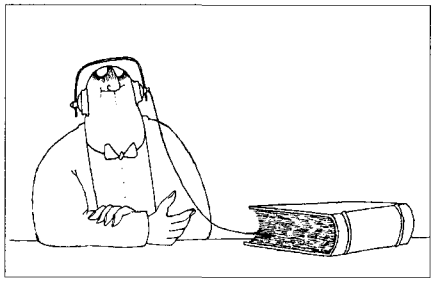
The Man Who Loved Only Numbers: The Story of Paul Erdös and the Search for Mathematical Truth, by Paul Hoffman (Hyperion, 306 pp., $22.95)

My Brain Is Open: The Mathematical Journeys of Paul Erdös, by Bruce Schechter (Simon & Schuster, 226 pp., $25)

A Beautiful Mind: A Biography of John Forbes Nash Jr., by Sylvia Nasar (Simon & Schuster; 466 pp., $25)

IN an essay entitled "The Maniac," G. K. Chesterton argued that madness is not so much a deficiency of reason as an *excess* of it. "Imagination does not breed insanity. Exactly what does breed insanity is reason. Poets do not go mad; but chess players do. Mathematicians go mad . . . but creative artists very seldom."

Like many of Chesterton's seductive propositions, this one is false. If you name a mad mathematician, I will counter you with a mad poet—a Cowper for a Cantor, a John Clare for an Alan Turing, a Poe (let's include borderline melancholics) for a Pascal. During one of his episodes of insanity, the mathematician John Forbes Nash Jr., whose story is told in *A Beautiful Mind*, found himself sharing a locked mental-health facility with the poet Robert Lowell.



During the 1950s, Nash had made brilliant advances in the mathematical theory of games. Then in 1959, at 30, he suddenly lapsed into paranoid schizophrenia. This disorder is known to have a strong genetic component (Nash's younger son is also a sufferer). Sylvia Nasar does not make any argument—and I do not think there is any to be made—that Nash's line of work was a factor in his collapse. To the contrary, Nash himself attributed his marvelous recovery—he seems to have returned to normality gradually through the 1980s—not to any of the faddish "treatments" he endured, but to a determined effort to think rationally, aided by some light mathematical work. In 1995 he was awarded the Nobel prize for economics. (There is no prize for mathematics, but Nash's early work had proved valuable to theoretical economists.)

Paul Erdös, the subject of *The Man Who Loved Only Numbers* and *My Brain Is Open*, was not mad, merely very eccentric. A mathematician who did important work on the prime numbers, Erdös was born in 1913 (a prime number, I cannot forbear noting, both forward and backward) and died a prime number of years later in 1996 (a prime backward and *upside down*—though not, alas, forward). All but the first two of those years were given up to mathematics—every day, every hour. He did nothing else; he wished to do nothing else. He had no possessions, no regular job, no home, no sex life, no interests outside math. All his friends were mathematicians. When they took him to movies or concerts, he fell asleep. He never watched TV or read fiction. His letters go like this: "Am in Sydney. Next week, Budapest. Let p be any odd prime . . ." He never spent a second trying to acquire any more money than his very frugal lifestyle required. When larger sums of money came to him, he gave them away as prizes for solving mathematical problems. I must say that while it is fascinating to know that such a human being can exist, and live a life longer—and probably happier—than most, Erdös is a poor subject for biography. His life *was* his mathematics. Once you have described the math, there is very little else to say.

It would be a shame if anyone were to conclude from reading these books that you need to be a monomaniacal nerd to excel in math, and may go barmy. In fact, the majority of mathematicians are perfectly normal. John von Neumann, possibly the greatest mathematician of this century (in his spare time he invented the computer), was quite a boulevardier, fond of women, booze, and fast cars. Descartes, who algebraized geometry, was a soldier and a courtier. Karl Weierstrass, creator of the modern theory of functions, spent his four years at university drinking and fighting, and left without a degree.

Paul Erdös had no possessions, no regular job, no home, no sex life, no interests outside math.

The roll call of great mathematicians, like that of poets, includes all types. There is no case to be made against math by exhibiting its weirder specimens, any more than there is a case to be made against football by citing O. J. Simpson. I fear that the case will be made none the less. In this sense, these books are mildly subversive—ammunition for the armies of Unreason. "Let no

Mr. Derbyshire, an *NR* contributing editor, is the author of the novel *Seeing Calvin Coolidge in a Dream*.

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one ignorant of geometry enter," warned the inscription at the door of Plato's Academy. Math has never since enjoyed such prominent status in the curriculum of a liberal education, and nowadays it must compete for students' attention with Jacques ("the tyranny of reason") Derrida and Michel ("reason is torture") Foucault. While mountebanks like that stalk the corridors of our universities, it does not help to portray math—the purest expression of human reason—as the domain of oddities like Nash and Erdös.

Nor does it help that all three of these books contain mathematical bloopers. Sylvia Nasar comes off best here, but even she makes a pig's ear of explaining the fabulous Riemann hypothesis. Mr Hoffman, in a very embarrassing passage, makes it plain he does not understand the mathematical meaning of the word "transcendental." Bruce Schechter speaks of the "graceful catenaries" of the bridges over the Danube at Budapest. The cables of a suspension bridge form parabolas, not catenaries. I don't expect my dentist to know this stuff, but the authors of books about mathematicians really should. **NR**

Two for the Road

JOHN READER

A Rage to Live: A Biography of Richard and Isabel Burton, by Mary S. Lovell (Norton, 736 pp., $35)

IT is not often that a book comes along which inspires a serious reconsideration of all that had previously been written on its subject. But *A Rage to Live* is just such a book—and all the more valuable for being the result of unanticipated good fortune.

In 1992, researching a different topic, Mary Lovell visited the Wiltshire County (England) Record Office; she found little of what she was looking for,

Mr. Reader is the author of *Africa: A Biography of the Continent* (Knopf).

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About the Author
Robert George is a Professor in the Politics Department at Princeton University. A distinguished author, George is a presidential appointee to the US Commission on Civil Rights.

March 1999 360 pp.
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In *Making Men Moral*, his 1995 book, Robert George questioned the central doctrines of liberal jurisprudence and political theory. In his new work he extends his critique of liberalism and goes beyond it to show how contemporary natural law theory provides a superior way of thinking about basic problems of justice and political morality. It is written with the same combination of stylistic elegance and analytical rigor that distinguished his critical work. Not content merely to defend natural law against its cultural critics, he deftly turns the tables and deploys the idea to mount a stunning attack on predominant liberal beliefs about such issues as abortion, sexuality, and the place of religion in public life. Readers interested in law, political science, and philosophy will find George's arguments both challenging and compelling.

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but masses of material on Richard and Isabel Burton, an archive of which previous biographers had been unaware.

These days, the name Richard Burton inevitably brings to mind the actor who was married to Elizabeth Taylor. But the hero of Mary Lovell's biography is Sir Richard Francis Burton (1821–90), the British explorer, linguist, and author who made his name during the Victorian period, when scientific inquiry, industrial expansion, and territorial acquisitiveness coalesced to create the foundations of the modern world. Like his twentieth-century namesake, Sir Richard Burton was something of a notorious figure. Dubbed "Ruffian Dick" while on military service in India

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Disguised as a prosperous Arab, Richard Burton joined a pilgrimage to Mecca, and thus became the first European to visit the holy shrines of Islam.

■

in his early twenties, he was a hearty drinker and never lost a reputation for idiosyncratic and often contrary behavior. For such reasons Burton was not destined to stand among the generals and diplomats who made history—and his personal story is the richer for it.

An exceptional linguistic talent was his defining characteristic. He knew 29 languages, some so fluently that he fooled native speakers into believing he had been born in their country. This facility was motivated by an insatiable drive to understand the lives of people in foreign parts, which in turn fed a prolific capacity to record and disseminate the knowledge he had acquired. Thus his explorations in India, Arabia, Africa, and South America were notable for their breadth of personal encounter and their depth of informed observation. Disguised as a prosperous Arab, for instance, he joined a pilgrimage to Mecca and thus became the first European to visit the holy shrines of Islam. Likewise, he talked his way into the then forbidden city of Harar in present-day Ethiopia, and made the first reconnaissance of the central African lakes which were subsequently identified as the source of the Nile. His memoirs of these travels have become classics of the genre.

Though Mary Lovell's narrative neglects none of the adventure of Richard Burton's life, it is the story of Isabel that gives the book its fresh insight and authority. Isabel may have been the product of Victorian society at its most staid, but she was no bluestocking. She had set her heart on the impoverished Richard Burton when she was twenty and married him secretly at thirty. During the decade before their marriage she kept a scrapbook account of his exploits. On a grand tour of Europe she climbed to where Richard had chiseled his name on the leaning tower of Pisa, and cut her own name beneath it.

Burton spent the final 12 years of his life serving as British Consul in Trieste, where he devoted a good deal of time and energy to the translation of Indian and Arabic erotic texts. The results sold well; his unexpurgated version of *Arabian Nights* earned the Burtons the equivalent of $600,000 in modern currency. Another work, *The Scented Garden*, was almost ready for the printers when he died. In a matter of days after Burton's death, Isabel was offered the equivalent of $376,000 for the manuscript. Burton had left her virtually penniless, so the money would have been useful. But she refused the offer and burned the manuscript, along with some journals and personal letters.

Hitherto it has been widely believed that Isabel burned her husband's papers in disgust at the discovery of dubious interests of which she had previously been unaware. But now it is impossible to believe that Isabel remained ignorant of her husband's consuming interest in all manner and form of erotica until after his death. Indeed, it was she who negotiated publication contracts for his translations (and drove a hard bargain). Furthermore, she personally helped to prepare an expurgated edition of Burton's *Arabian Nights* for the printers.

Isabel Burton survived her husband by five years and six months—they lie together in a stone replica of an Arab tent, in Mortlake cemetery. Even before Isabel died it was believed that Richard Burton earned a place in the pantheon of Victorian heroes despite the influence of his wife. Now we know that she had earned a place there beside him. **NR**

(Un)common Sense

HUGH LLOYD-JONES

Manifesto of a Passionate Moderate: Unfashionable Essays, by Susan Haack (Chicago, 212 pp., $17.95)

THE estrangement in this country between the world of affairs and action and the academic world strikes a foreign academic person as very marked, even if like Susan Haack and this reviewer, he only comes from England, where things are not so very different. In the academic world of America, the truth of political correctness is taken for granted almost as much as that of Christianity was before the middle of the nineteenth century. Not altogether surprisingly, many practical persons have become heartily sick of this, with the result that they despise and ignore the whole academic world. But as the book before me shows, the academic world is not entirely contemptible.

Political correctness derives much of its strength from an attempt by certain philosophers, influenced by French theorists who in their turn have been influenced by German theorists, to abolish the belief in truth. If truth is unattainable, people are free to make up their own history. Politically correct teachers

Mr. Lloyd-Jones was formerly Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford.

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wish to make up a history that will help their pupils to have "self-esteem"; and "self-esteem," which other people might call their complacency and vanity, does not encourage the young to want to learn. It is partly because of the cult of "self-esteem," together with other sentimentalities derived, in the last resort, from the Enlightenment and in particular from Rousseau, that the state schools are in such an appalling condition.

There is thus an urgent need for a refutation of the attack on the belief in the possibility of the truth, and few people are better able to defend the notion of truth, and in strong, clear prose, than Susan Haack. She is a philosopher of great distinction, one of the world's leading experts in logic and the theory of knowledge.

The early essays of the book are devoted to the defense of truth and unbiased inquiry. The second of them contains an imaginary dialogue between the great pragmatist philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1830–1914) and the popular philosopher Richard Rorty, whose so-called pragmatism is strongly diluted by the influence of modern French theorists; the vagueness and sloppiness of Rorty's thinking is brought out in a way that is not only cogent but highly entertaining. The philosophical analysis of the notion of truth is a complicated business; there are correspondence theories and coherence theories, and combinations of both. But here will be found an effective defense of Aristotle's remark that to say of what is that it is—or of what is not, that it is not—is true.

The book contains also a valuable essay on the related concept of relativism. Susan Haack rightly says that this term refers not merely to a thesis but to a whole family, some of them shallow but others deep, and then proceeds to list its numerous varieties. She does not claim to have refuted relativism, but does claim, with reason, to have suggested how some of the considerations which have motivated certain forms of it might be accommodated without recourse to a belief in relativism.

Professor Haack admirably discusses the relation of philosophy to science and to literature, situating it somewhere between the two but not allowing it to draw uncomfortably close to either. She deals firmly with the notion of "feminist science" and of "feminist epistemology," dealing in the process with some writers whose silliness would be amusing if they were not so often taken seriously. She is what she calls "an old-fashioned feminist," strongly defending women's right to fair treatment but having no use for "an ambitious, imperious feminism which stresses the 'woman's point of view.'" She distinguishes all the varied meanings of the expression "multiculturalism," from those that are harmless or relatively harmless to those that are both harmful and absurd.

The last essay in the book contains a powerful plea for unbiased inquiry, without political motivation. It also touches on the "research ethic"; Professor Haack has no use for the rule that one must publish or perish. In a subject like mine, classics, there are certain humble tasks for which we need the journeymen, but in philosophy the rule leads to the publication of a great deal of boring stuff without that compensation. Not many people who write about philosophy have much new to say that really matters. But to this rule Susan Haack is a notable exception. **NR**

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Susan Haack is what she calls an 'old-fashioned feminist,' having no use for 'an ambitious, imperious feminism' which stresses the 'woman's point of view.'

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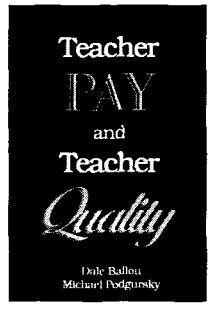

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■ ART ■

No Phony

JAMES GARDNER

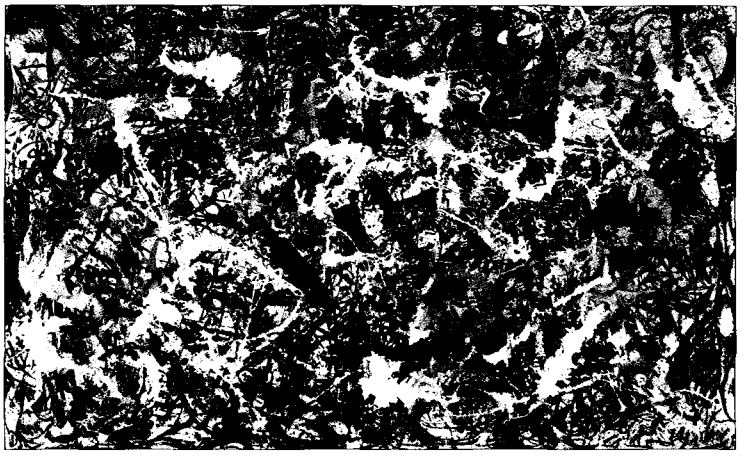
JUST before flinging a table at a luckless photographer, the perennially inebriated Jackson Pollock started shouting, "I am not a phony! I am not a phony!" Indeed, he wasn't. Still, neither in his lifetime nor subsequently could he quite succeed in putting to rest the lingering doubts of a great many people. One must hope that a new exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art will improve that state of affairs.

This review accepts Pollock's greatness as axiomatic: when the dazzling originality of his famous drip technique is joined to the consistent brilliance of its deployment, the equation is a simple one. Unfortunately, criticism can only point to what it cannot prove. It can direct attention to an especially splendid passage of paint, but it cannot prove the splendor. Thus there will be no attempt here to refute the unkillable claim that a five-year-old could paint a Pollock. Anyone who feels up to that task is cordially encouraged to try.

All good visual art is doubly physical: there is physicality first in the object in question, then in the viewer's inhabiting the same space as that object. In other words, no painting worthy of the name will be as satisfying in even the best reproduction as in the flesh. Few artists in history have exploited this element as Pollock did. Such is the physicality of his art, both in the balletic gyrations he went through to create it and in the operatic painterliness of the results, that the viewer, as he stands before it, is apt to feel an involvement that goes well beyond the "me–it" distance from which we usually inspect a painting. As the saying goes, you have to be there. And you will never get a better chance to be there than at the show now up at the Modern.

Larger and better than the 1982 Pollock show in Paris, it is the only major American exhibition of this most American of artists in over three decades. One would be hard put to imagine a more definitive accounting of Pollock's troubled career: every stumbling step of it is represented by a plurality of exemplary works, starting in 1934 when the artist was 22, and ending at his death in 1956 when, still inebriated, he drove his car into a tree on Long Island.

On seeing the exhibition, one realizes that, if the instances of Pollock's genius are somewhat rarer than expected, examples of sheer talent are far more abundant. Pollock was great for only five years of his career, from *Alchemy* in 1947 to *Blue Poles* in 1952. But before, during, and after that brief span, he produced works that show signs of a sheer competency that one is apt to deny him if one buys into the myth that he was some wild child, a cowboy from the Far West who accidentally tripped onto a single brilliant conceit. His earliest imitations of David Sequeiros and Thomas Hart Benton from the Thirties reveal a skillful technique and up to a point a telling dramatic sense. Untitled figural drawings from a few years later, joining Luca Signorelli to Pablo Picasso, display undeniable deftness with a pencil.



Convergence: Number 10, 1952.

But what interests us in Pollock, of course, are those five core years in which he changed the course of art history. It was then that he finally came to terms with the full implications of the drip technique he had been toying with for the previous decade. Through the calculated chaos of a laden brush flicked at an unprimed canvas, Pollock found a way to harness at last the famed automatic drawing of the Surrealists.

The fruits of these labors fall into two groups, the great and the merely excellent. Typical of the latter is *White Light* from 1954. This thickly impasted work is tense, dense, and vibrant, its lines slashing forward and back with all the vigor of an epileptic eel. And yet, impressive as the painting is, we respond more to what seems to be the logical consequence of Pollock's technique expertly applied than to any depth or drama in this specific example of it. In a sense, this is less automatic drawing than automatic pilot.

Pollock's real greatness is evident in those works that not only exemplify his drip technique but capture something far more essential than a merely lovely effect. What animates Pollock at such moments is a kind of higher sensualism, an unshakable confidence in the eudaimonic power, even the moral force of sheer beauty: whether in the densely kinetic traceries of *Lavender Mist* or the saturated rifeness of *Autumn Rhythm*.

But even here, within the very precinct of his greatness, Pollock reveals limitations: his one compositional trope is the horror vacui or all-over patterning. There is no significant subordination of one part to another, and his voids, on the rare occasions when they occur, are never interesting. For all the relentless fidgeting of his lines, he has but a single mode, that of scintillant, exuberating energy.

In this respect he is a little like David Helfgott, the pianist improbably heroized in the movie *Shine*: he can do slower, more meditative passages well enough, but he lives for the prestissimos where his neurotic energies can finally be freed from the tedium of restraint. When his energy burst upon the world in 1947, no one had ever seen the like. And even now, half a century later, we are still struggling to make our peace with it. **NR**

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■ FOOD & DRINK ■

Mug's Game

ANDREW STUTTAFORD

'OHHH," Monica e-mailed her friend (no, not that one), "how i long for the time when we can just spend a day together . . . starting w/ coffee at Starbucks . . ." Starbucks. It's where an intern bought a mug to give a President, and it's where Nicole Simpson first met Ron Goldman. I go there, and so, probably, do you.

By the year 2000, the chain, which started with a single store in Seattle, will have two thousand outlets. We spend $1 billion a year there. When future historians try to conjure up the atmosphere of the Clinton years, they will have to include the faint smell of roasting coffee, preferably a variety—Ethiopia Yergacheffe, perhaps?—from some really Third World part of the Third World.

At first glance this may seem a welcome development in a country once famous for the horror of its coffee. Still, if we are what we eat, then we should also be what we drink. The flight from Folgers must mean that we have changed.

Well, the country is richer. Hardscrabble is so *over*. So we reject that older *Robusta* America in favor of a mall-chic coffee shop where the person behind the counter is a "barista" and the smallest serving is a "tall." Starbucks has become a symbol, a sign of class and a certain refinement. Its coffee is an object of desire at $3 (or more) a shot. Aficionados are "cuppers," bean geeks able to discuss the "tanginess" of a Costa Rica Tres Rios without bursting into laughter.

We shouldn't mock this. Aspiration is the engine that drives America. Yet there is something wrong: consider the music of Starbucks, the CDs lined up for sale by the register.

Not the jazz. That their stores play and sell jazz is no surprise. Starbucks is marketing its coffee as a grown-up pleasure and to many, jazz has always been sophistication's soundtrack. No, the company's taste in contemporary music hints at the problem. Starbucks urges upon us pop of the most improving, didactic kind. *Songs of the Siren*, a 1996 "tribute to women's voices," was one finger-tapping choice. Naturally, the feminist rockers of Lilith Fair have not been overlooked. The company is a "proud sponsor" of the tour, in a "perfect blend of coffee, community, and music."

Now take a look at the books on sale amid the Frappuccini. Naturally, an Arabian Mocha Sanani drinker does not *Hunt for Red October* with Tom Clancy. But Marion Wright Edelman?

■

These days, it's the coffee that has to make *us* 'good to the last drop.'

■

That's much more like it. One of her offerings is on display at my local Starbucks, near the Van Gogh mugs and that timeless childhood classic, *Girls Who Rocked the World: Heroines from Sacajawea to Sheryl Swoopes.*

You may also find a recent memoir by Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz, *Pour Your Heart Into It.* Starbucks is a great American success story and a triumph for Mr. Schultz, a kid from Brooklyn's post-war projects. But the worldview revealed in this lugubrious volume (printed, in case you were worried, "on totally chlorine-free paper") sometimes seems more Alger Hiss than Horatio Alger.

Mr. Schultz downplays his formidable business skills, but makes sure to mention his health-care *kaffeeklatsch* with Bill Clinton. The rest of this drearily "progressive" recital includes some over-excited environmentalism (who could forget the epic struggle over "double cupping," the now-abandoned practice of putting one paper cup into another to protect tender fingers from hot coffee) and cloying reminders that the Starbucks CEO wants "diversity in our management team."

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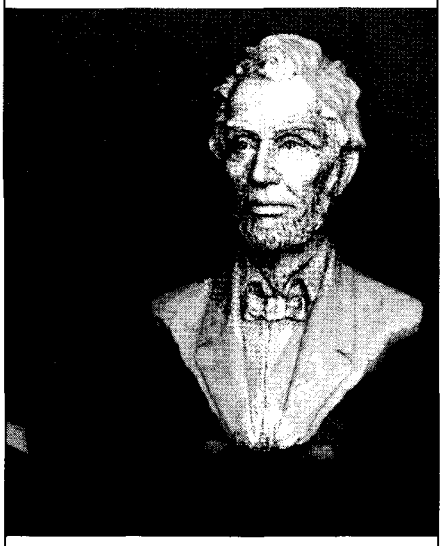

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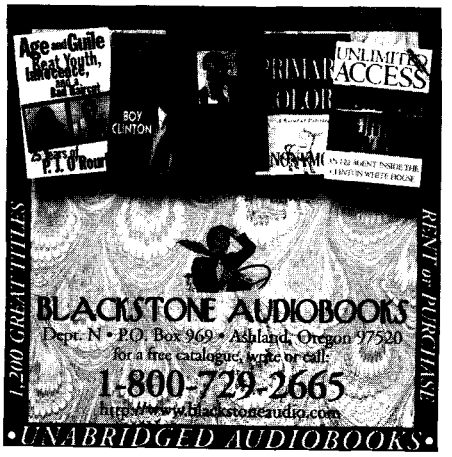
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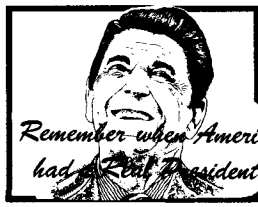

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STUTTAFORD
(Continued from page 71)

Boomers, all the NPR-ishness only burnishes the coffee chain's upmarket image.

It's a piety that Starbucks exploits brilliantly. Which would be fine, so long as everybody else were not expected to play along.

But they are. And as the success of Starbucks shows, they do. The Boomers may have had the party, but the whole country has to live through the hangover. A generation that never could say no to itself is proving very eager to say it to the younger folk. Like grumpy older neighbors, they want the stereo turned down and the strong drinks put away. As Howard Schultz explains, he is trying to offer a place where students can meet "free from the heavy influence of alcohol."

The only heavy influence around is that of the paternalistic Mr. Schultz. He is the perfect spokesman for an era when "decaf latte" has entered the upper-middle-class lexicon as shorthand for a little self-indulgence.

Indulgence? Once, we knew the true meaning of that word. Indulgences should be decadent, degenerate, altogether *de trop*. They should not be decaffeinated.

The 1890s swept cheerfully by on a torrent of absinthe, champagne, and opium. Today, smoking is out, sex is "inappropriate," and a few beers will get you branded a "binge drinker" by Harvard's School of Public Health. Which leaves coffee. It's allowed, and pathetically the country is grateful, even excited. Too FDA'd out for real, unvarnished bad-for-you fun, America has defined delight down.

Like the English were once said to do, Starbucks drinkers "take their pleasures sadly." Even the modest pleasure of a little java has to "mean" something. These days, it's the coffee that has to make *us* "good to the last drop." So Starbucks steps in with the sip that sanctifies.

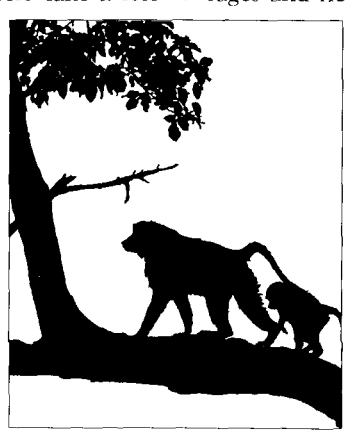
Suddenly I want a Maxwell House. Double-cupped. **NR**

■ BOOKS IN BRIEF ■

Sexual Orientation & Human Rights in American Religious Discourse, edited by Saul M. Olyan and Martha Nussbaum (Oxford, 260 pp., $29.95)

THE editors of this volume fear that "reasoned debate" about homosexuality is imperiled. Indeed Martha Nussbaum in her introduction reports that she was "surprised" to "discover" that she could engage in such debate with religious thinkers who take a less permissive view than she in the Colorado Amendment Two "gay-rights" litigation. (That law banned protected-class status or special treatment of people on the basis of "sexual orientation.") It is hard to take Professor Nussbaum's "surprise" at face value. In testimony at the court case where the constitutionality of Amendment Two was challenged, she encountered several formidable scholars whose "reasoned debate" with her was stymied by her systematic and apparently deliberate misrepresentations, and by her dogmatic insistence that their manifestly philosophical arguments were mere sectarian theological apologies. In any event, while uneven, the essays here are neither shrill, nor overtly polemical or apologetic. A highlight is Rabbi David Novak explaining that, in Jewish tradition, pleasure is not itself an appropriate end or reason for action. Its value is entirely dependent on the goodness of the activity it accompanies. The book concludes with thoughtful essays by legal scholars Andrew Koppelman and Michael McConnell. In a thought experiment, they try to imagine whether Americans might some day agree to disagree about sex and marriage—that is, whether we as a society can ever achieve the ideal of "moral neutrality." By now, however, we should be able to see that such "neutrality" is an illusion. Law and public policy cannot, in the end, be neutral on key moral questions pertaining to sex and marriage. The lesson of modern political theory and practice is that "neutrality" is a disguise for liberal morality.

—GERARD V. BRADLEY



Anne Frank: The Biography, by Melissa Müller (Henry Holt, 330 pp., $23)

JUST when you thought the world had heard all it needed to know about the adolescent musings of the Holocaust's most famous victim, Melissa Müller offers a gripping documentary account of her fate, including new information. Forget the pubescent prose of Anne Frank's rages and her bumbling puppy love, as well as the fact that we know how her story will turn out: as with Pickett's Charge or Kennedy's assassination, one wants to reach out to stay the oncoming catastrophe. Another minute, another hour might have saved Anne's life. Through the Nazis' daily encroachments on the Franks' freedom, the claustrophobia of their hidden life, the eventual betrayal, and the horror of their journey toward doom, Miss Müller hones in on the homely details that lead inexorably to that final transport to Bergen–Belsen. This meticulous recounting of Frank's life is an inspirational tribute to her father and his non- Jewish employees, powerless to change the outcome, yet heroic nevertheless in their efforts to do so.

—JULIE CRANE

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Strains in Democratic Practice

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 16

THE news and related developments flowed up in midweek in ghastly non-recognition of each other. But that is becoming habitual in the matter of federal aid to the states.

The headline on Friday was "CONGRESS PROVIDES $1.2 BILLION FOR HIRING TEACHERS NATIONWIDE." Granted the decisions haven't all been made—how much for which state—but the underlying story was issued earlier in the week. It is now an annual report of the Kennedy School at Harvard which tells of the "wide disparity in the financial flows between the Federal Government and each of the states."

The normal tendency when receiving graphs of such nature is to look at one's own state first. How is Connecticut doing? Answer: Lousy.

Connecticut's "deficit"—that term means, how many more dollars did Connecticut turn over to the Feds, compared to dollars it got from the Feds—came to $2,300 per capita. That is a ton of money. For a family of four, $9,200.

You ask, where does Connecticut's money go? Answer (to use a synechdoche), New Mexico. Connecticut ranks as the number one deprived, New Mexico as the number one favored. New Mexico's revenues come in at the rate of $3500 per resident. That makes it per capita almost $700 greater than any other state.

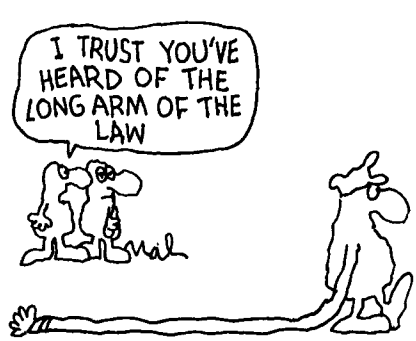
Now what are elementary deductions to be made on the basis of the above? They are, measuring broadly, that any marginal extra disbursement by the Federal Government is going to cost residents of Connecticut more than residents of New Mexico. Another way to put it is that any increased federal expenditure intended for general welfare distribution should be hated in Connecticut and loved in New Mexico. Hated in Connecticut not because Connecticut is opposed to hiring more teachers, but because Connecticut can proceed to do so much more economically by paying its own bills.

There are those who will object on the grounds that redistribution is built into the federal idea. Those who have more, pay more for those who have less. The idea is admirable, but democratic practice suggests that such disbursements—away from the family hearth—should be done with some sense of what it is that is being done. One way to put it: If a plebiscite were taken in Connecticut to authorize a $2,300 contribution to the welfare of New Mexico (read, sister states), what percentage of the popular vote would you forecast for the affirmative?

Correct; the plebiscite would be heavily disavowed. But what does this tell us about democratic practice? The representatives of the State of Connecticut, in the Senate and in the House, routinely vote for increases in welfare budgets. It is splendid to think oneself an activist in the cause of looking after one's brother, and many individuals who live in Connecticut are extremely active as philanthropists. They give to the Red Cross, to their schools and hospitals and churches and homeless centers. We cheer that Congress is coming up with $1.2 billion for teachers. Big deal: the American people pay almost $400 billion for education. What makes the federal dollop so newsworthy is the trick now generations old of persuading the public that any dispensation coming in from Washington is—a free lunch.

One suspects that there is a spiritual collusion between cheerleaders for democratic government, and cheerleaders for maximizing welfare. They pretend not to be viewing what the other is up to. Just so that the federal pot grows, that's the important thing. Worry about theoretical contradictions some other time.

That isn't always a bad idea. And it's fun and even rewarding to pause over democratic contradictions that are taken quite for granted, for instance, in the United States, the tradition of the Senate, where the little state of Rhode Island has identical power as the state of California, approximately 30 times more heavily populated. At an entirely different level, the debate is going on in England over whether the House of Lords should have euthanasia of inherited peers. The London *Observer* reported that Lady Jay tried to quiet down the Lords' fears. "Nobody is saying to them: 'We will take away your stately homes, your hunting rights, your labradors, your gin and tonics.'" Why should there be hereditary peers? Baroness Kennedy, who just made it into the House of Lords, announced, "I do not believe that I would employ an hereditary plumber." On the other hand, Baroness Flather spoke up, "It is very strange to say to those people whose title dates back for a thousand years that their legitimacy must be questioned, while those who are appointed by the party machine become more legitimate."



The argument is ancient, and of course runs us into such anti-democratic instruments as the Constitution, which puts a range of policies outside the hands of the majority, including manumission, until a great big civil war changed *that* policy.

Jefferson Was Right

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 3

A COUPLE of days before the election, front-page news featured an American who had run successfully for office, retired after two terms, and spent a long later life writing letters radioactive with political and moral advice to everyone in sight, with special attention to his longtime opponent, John Adams, whom he had succeeded to the Presidency. It was a historical convenience that that correspondence ended, so to speak, simultaneously. Dead men don't write letters, especially not to other dead men. Both died on the same day, the Fourth of July, 1826. Thomas Jefferson is the most complicated of the Founders, spawning exegetes who seek to pass comprehensive judgement on the author of the Declaration of Independence who kept slaves. The historians agree on much—that he was a genius and a polymath; and disagree about much, mostly on the question of race. Jefferson was an accommodationist on the slavery issue, and of course we learned over the weekend that he had definitely procreated a son, by Sally Hemings, one of his two hundred slaves.

The story was told with some bounce on National Public Radio on Sunday, in an interview by correspondent Daniel Zwerdling with Eric Lander, a geneticist at the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research.

Z: The proof is finally in. The President not only did have an illicit sexual affair, he fathered at least one child with his lover. . . .

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And now, DNA testing has ended that debate.

L: To trace descendants from the 1800s, Doctor Eugene Foster needed to get a line of male descendance. For example, Sally Hemings's son needed to have a son, and then a son of the son, and the son of a son, so that he could trace the transmission of the Y-chromosome, which is passed virtually intact from each father to each son.

Z: So in other words, this researcher found somebody who was Sally Hemings's great-great-great-great-great-great—what?

L: Grandson.

Z: And said, "May I take some blood samples from you, sir, please?"

L: Exactly.

Z: It is interesting that now, finally, historians and history books are going to have to somehow revise their thinking about Thomas Jefferson, his writings and thoughts about slavery. Here he was having sex and children with one of his slaves.

L: His biggest worry, that he expressed later in life, was that emancipation of slaves would lead to racial mixing and amalgamation. Knowing now that he in fact had a sexual relationship with one of his own slaves, I think deeply personalizes that issue and adds I must say a bit of hypocrisy to his position as well.

THE next line of inquiry. Which of the following observations by Jefferson, made to various correspondents, are now suspect?

1. "When [the moral sense] is wanting, we endeavor to supply the defect by education [and religion]. These correctives supplied by the moralist, the preacher, and legislator lead into a course of correction of those whose depravity is not too profound to be eradicated." Still true?

2. "The human character, we believe, requires in general constant and immediate control to prevent its being biased from right by the seductions of self-love." Okay?

3. "Take from man his selfish propensities, and he can have nothing to seduce him from the practice of virtue." Nothing wrong with that. We are getting warmer:

4. "That every man shall be made virtuous by any process whatever is, indeed, no more to be expected than that every tree shall be made to bear fruit, and every plant nourishment." Or—

5. "Self-love . . . is the sole antagonist of virtue, leading us constantly by our propensities to self-gratification in violation of our moral duties to others."

6. He must have reflected on the undeniability of Sally's favors to a slavemaster. "With the laborers of England generally, does not the moral coercion of want subject their will as despotically to that of their employer, as the physical constraint does the soldier, the seaman, or the slave?" And, finally, three winners:

7. "There are various ways of keeping truth out of sight." "Truth necessary for our own character must not be suppressed." "The only exact testimony of a man is his actions." And, the cautious deference to the long reach of historical curiosity:

8. "Experience proves that the moral and physical qualities of man, whether good or evil, are transmissible in a certain degree from father to son."

Jefferson did not have in mind, on the matter of father/son transmissibility, a record of Y-chromosomes. But the epitaph is useful. We are persuaded that Jefferson's eloquence on the matter of the frailty of man was substantially generated by introspection.

The End of the Affair?

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 6

THE point is endlessly made that the Lewinsky matter is by popular acclamation no longer the North Star of the news world—yet so much, great and small, seems tethered to it. You can even say, if you're a moralist, that the national challenge is of the same order faced by France one hundred years ago when there was acquiescence in a national cover-up of the Dreyfus scandal. We still pause wondering if what seems the entire body of the Japanese people have succeeded in vaporizing the Rape of Nanking. It is very probable at this point that the Lewinsky business will slide through the widening interstices of constitutional order. What is by no means certain is that what we are going through will be treated by future historians as something less than a moment of moral aphasia.

The sense of it all is certainly that the elections made Mr. Clinton a folk hero. If he had screwed two interns, maybe he'd have carried Texas.

On the other hand, there are loose ends. We are advised that the American people by a very great majority wish to hear not about Lewinsky and its implications, but about the great issues. What are people really concerned about? Education, Social Security, and HMOs. On the other hand, what they want on radio and television and in the newspapers is everything about Lewinsky, and hot pursuit of the tributaries.

We learned on Friday the latest developments in the Paula Jones business. 1) The White House said no, they would not pay Paula $1 million, their last offer of $700,000 having been turned down. 2) Paula Jones's lawyers said they are getting ready to quit—their client is too unyielding. 3) The White House figures that the threat of impeachment is just about over. Granted, if the Court of Appeals overturns the earlier decision to close out Jones's complaint there would be a problem. Up until the acknowledgment by the President on August 17 of the inappropriate relationship most people assumed it was inconceivable that Governor Clinton had dropped his pants in front of Paula Jones. Now most people are agreed it is inconceivable Bill Clinton did *not* drop his pants in front of Paula Jones. But senior spinmasters are saying: What, really, does it matter? The people aren't asking for anything. And you have only two more years to hang in there and all that stuff will just go away. Who cares? Who will care?

We wheel around and look at Rep. Henry Hyde. He sent over to the White House a questionnaire for President Clinton to fill out, and swear to the truth of—a total of 81 questions.

It is, never mind the elections, stuff of very high drama. The story took Starr 450 pages; the Hyde questionnaire is less than a single page in the *New York Times*. The metronomic opening words never change—*Do you admit or deny that . . .*, providing a *basso ostinato*—thump thump thump thump—that builds to a sundering climax, without ever a quiver in the deadpan legal composure.

The first question: *"Do you admit or deny that you are the chief law-enforcement officer of the United States of America?"*

Question 41: "As to each, do you admit or deny that you gave the following gifts to Monica Lewinsky at any time in the past? a) A lithograph. b) A hat pin. c) A large 'Black Dog' canvas bag. d) A large 'Rockettes' blanket. e) A pin of the New York skyline. f) A box of cherry chocolates. g) A pair of novelty sunglasses. h) A stuffed animal from the 'Black Dog.' i) A marble bear's head. j) A London pin. k) A shamrock pin. l) An Annie Lennox compact disc. m) Davidoff cigars.

Arthur Miller didn't do better than that in any of the lines of questioning in *The Crucible*.

The final question is matter-of-fact. Did the President instruct his associates to invoke executive privilege before the grand jury? But although there is enough drama in the questionnaire to sustain high theatrical tension, we are encouraged to view the exercise as nothing more than a necessary formality. What, after all, is the point, people ask? Everybody knows he did it to Monica and everybody knows he lied about it, and everybody knows the American people don't want to burden themselves with burdensome syllogisms along the lines that someone who violates the law shouldn't be retained as chief executive of the law.

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■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

I AM one of the .07 per cent of pundits who predicted the November elections correctly. Other practitioners of the beige arts confidently opined that the GOP would pick up anywhere from seven to 15 seats, but I said they would lose seats and that the Democrats might even take back the House.

Trouble is, I didn't say it publicly, but in a letter to Andrew Ferguson, my former roommate, so to speak, who shared this page with me when his "Gimlet Eye" column ran in alternate issues. Only Andy can prove my powers of prognostication so I'm having him served with a subpoena *duces tecum*: come and bring the letter. What a great day it will be for CNN. First a shot of the now-familiar D.C. courthouse emblazoned with the name E. Barrett Prettyman, then the great bronze doors open and out comes Andy. Flanked by his legal team, he steps up to the bank of microphones and starts reading, so awed by my accuracy that he neglects to stop and reads straight through my gossip and dirty jokes.

I arrived at my prediction via my usual unscientific method of letting my mind wander. This is especially easy to do while watching political talk shows. I ranged hither and yon, reflected on this and that, toyed with a fragmented thought here, a filigree of memory there—what champions of the scientific method call "staring into space" and being "a thousand miles away." But it only looks that way. Something will come to me, and then all the fragments and filigrees suddenly spring out and wrap around it like those jungle vines that squeeze people to death. Or to put it more fastidiously: an idea is born.

The GOP pundits' favorite claim was "The country is conservative," varied with "The Democrats have turned to the Right," "Clinton is governing from the Right," and Rush Limbaugh's hubristic signature line, "We've already won."

As I listened to this drumbeat I stared into space and thought about what happened in October when a private school in Georgia tried to expel a 14-year-old boy who looked so pretty in girls' clothes and makeup that everyone thought he was a she. When the school board found him out and tried to expel him the student body rose up in protest. "What's so weird about that?" asked one boy. Other boys wore hair bows to show their support and confronted the principal with their student handbook, quoting back to him a section about respecting "diversity in opinion, culture, ideas, behavioral characteristics, attributes, or challenges."

I don't care who governs from the Right, when eighth-grade boys defend effeminacy anywhere in the country, the country is not conservative. The spectacle of beribboned Penrods invoking the student handbook to save their transvestite from the officials who issued the handbook bespeaks the rife confusion of a country that has lost the innately conservative principle contained in the expression "the nature of things."

The Left, aware of the value of a confused electorate, has succeeded so well in destroying this principle that Americans can no longer distinguish "hate crimes" from the propensity of schoolboys since time immemorial to shun sissies. The old idea that we are endowed with the capacity to outgrow childish cruelty is gone, replaced by today's credo, "There but for the diversity handbook go I."

No country can exchange the nature of things for the diversity handbook and still call itself conservative. I knew the GOP was doomed the moment I read about the peachy he–she.

Listening to Republicans say "The American people want small government" and Democrats say "The American people care about education," I knew the cares had it. A care count is much more accurate than a vote count and will soon replace it. The word "care" has taken on so much emotional water that it is now impossible to pronounce without an involuntary catch in the voice, hence the Irish-tenor quality of our political debate. The GOP is on the losing end of the want–care axis because we can't say "The American people care about small government" without triggering visions of overwrought volunteers enrolling the poor little government in an outreach program.

IT was while some Republican was intoning "The American people want small government" that I was attacked by a hemp-strength filigree. Suddenly I remembered the first Wednesday in November 1952, the day after Eisenhower's landslide ended twenty years of the New Deal. It was the day I walked into a shellshocked high school.

The smell of fear was in the air. None of us had been alive the last time a Republican was in the White House but we had heard plenty about him and he was still booed in newsreels. We were all born in the mid-1930s so we had no memory of the Depression but we were raised on stories about it and knew that a Republican caused it and Roosevelt cured it. In short, we were New Deal babies and we were scared to death.

Our first chance to panic came at lunchtime. "We won't have enough to eat . . . We'll have to put cardboard in our shoes . . . We'll freeze in the winter . . . Daddy said he's going back to resharpening his old razor blades." Finally somebody sobbed, "We'll have to eat margarine!" That was much worse than it sounds today. Margarine was still sold uncolored and looked like lard, which we associated with poor people. Nice people might cook with margarine but they always put butter on the table.

Such attitudes do not fade away. One way or another they are passed on, reemerging in new guises with new names, such as "middle-class entitlements," to seduce a new generation. I have a hunch that the New Deal is now a string on the American DNA.

Professional pollsters would never use one school in Georgia, Irish tenors, and margarine hang-ups to draw conclusions about the entire country, but then I would never talk to three thousand people, much less believe what they said, so we're even. **NR**

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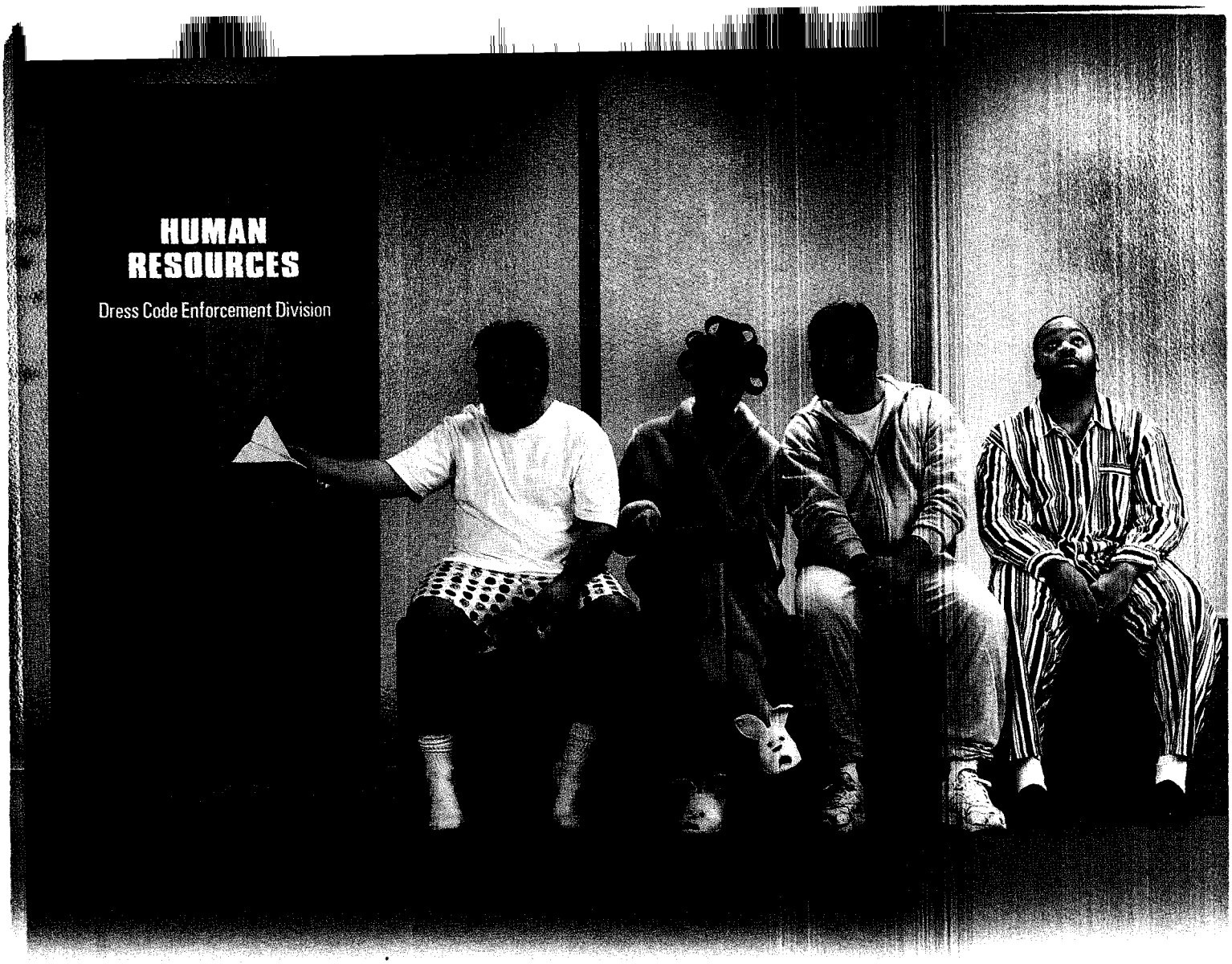

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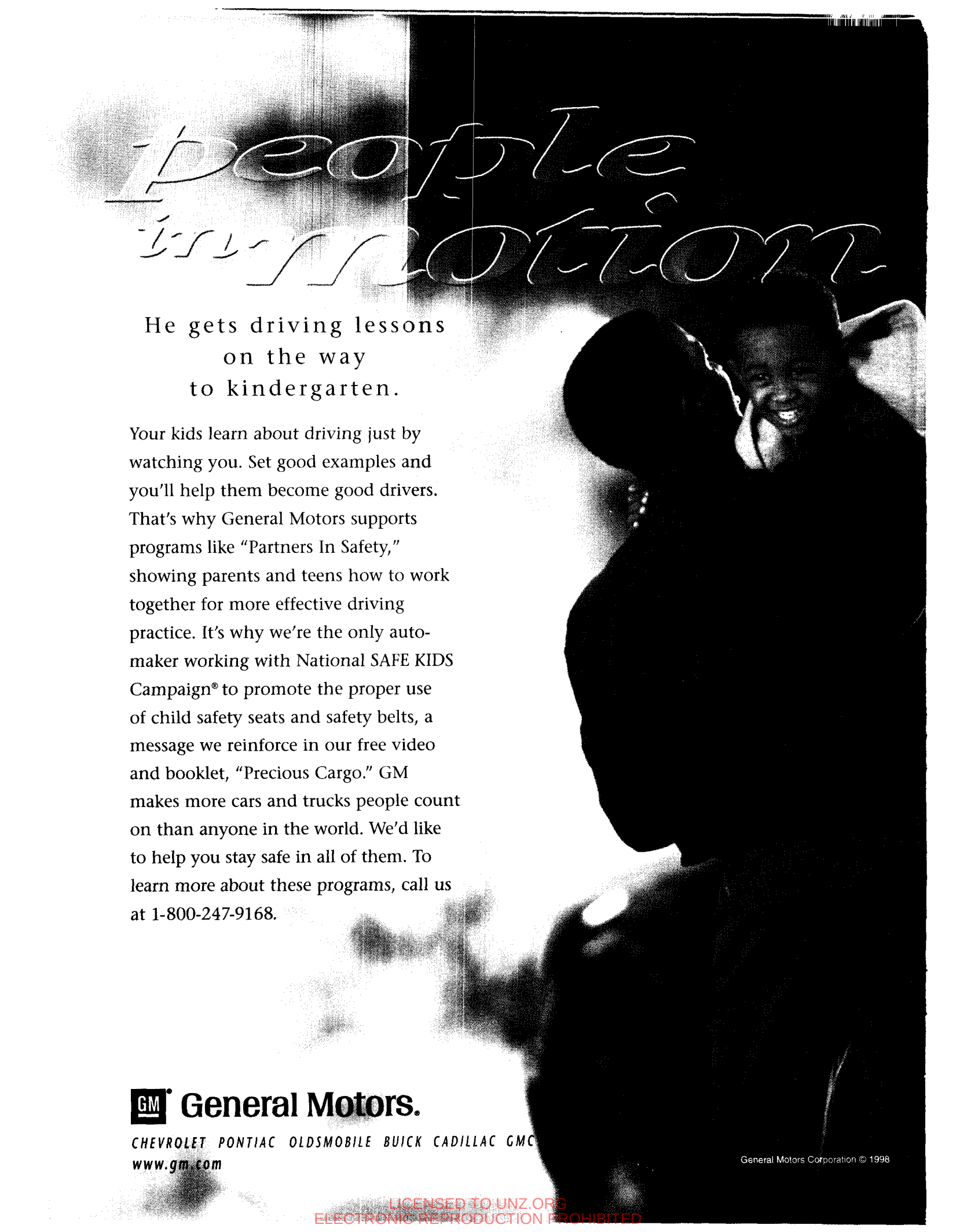

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